DISCOURSES, OR SERMONS ON SEVERAL SCRIPTURES.

BY THE

Right Reverend Father in God,

EZEKIEL,

Late Lord Bishop of

LONDON-DERRY.

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LONDON,

Printed for **Nathanael Ranew**, at the *King's Arms* in St. *Paul's* Church-Yard, 1691.

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THE PREFACE TO THE READER.

Christian Reader,

ALthough the following *Sermons* need no *Epistle* to commend them to any intelligent *Reader*, yet Custom having made it necessary to say something, for the Satisfaction of the World, concer-

ning the *Posthumous Works* of deceased Persons, I shall therefore speak a few Words briefly.

The Reverend *Prelate*, the Author of them, was a Person of great Natural Parts, and Excellent Learning, as well as of great Piety and Charity: One that adorned the *Church of England*, whereof he was an Eminent *Pillar*, ruling well in the Church of God, and therefore deserved *double Honour*, as the *Apostle* speaks: And doubtless, his Reward is now great in Heaven, with

with his Lord and Maſter, whoſe Service here on Earth was accounted by him as his higheſt Honour, and that which he profeſſed himſelf moſt ambitious of.

He was a Perſon of great Modeſty and Humility; having very mean and low Thoughts of himſelf, and his own Abilities; which was the Reaſon why the World had ſo little Knowledge of him from the *Preſs*, having publiſhed nothing * but what he was conſtrained to, either by the

* See his *Vanity of the World*, and *A Funeral Sermon*, &c. *Octavo.*

reſtleſs Importunity of *Friends*, or the Commands of thoſe that ſome Time were his *Superiors*.

But the Intendment of this *Epiſtle* being not to give the World an Account of the Life of this Excellent Perſon, whoſe Praiſe is deſervedly in the *Church of God*, I forbear to add any thing farther concerning him, hoping it will ſhortly be done by a more worthy Pen.

And as for the following *Sermons*, the excellent Style in which they are writ-

written, and the exact Accuracy with which they are penn'd, may give abundant Satisfaction unto All, in the Reading of them, that they are His *Lordſhip*'s own, and were fairly written with his own Hand, and copied out from thence, ſince his *Death*, by one of his *neareſt Relations*, and ſo tranſmitted unto the Preſs.

The Subject Matter of them being agreeable to the Divine Inſpirations of the *Holy Scriptures*, will ſpeak better for themſelves,

ſelves, than the Words of any other can. And that they may be very uſeful and profitable unto thoſe that heard them, and unto all that ſhall read them, is the hearty and ſincere Prayer of the *Publiſher*. *Farewell.*

The

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CONTAINING

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Fools make a Mock at Sin.

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For we know him that hath ſaid, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompence, ſaith the Lord. And again; The Lord ſhall judge his People. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

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THE FOLLY OF SINNERS In Making a Mock at Sin.

A SERMON ON PROV. XIV. IX.

BY

EZEKIEL HOPKINS,

Late Lord Biſhop of *London-Derry*.

LONDON,

Printed for *Nathanael Ranew*, at the *King's Arms* in St. *Paul's* Church-Yard, 1691.

THE FOLLY OF Sinners, &c.

PROV. 14. 9.

Fools make a Mock at Sin.

WE are not generally to expect any connexion, either of Senſe or Sentences in this Book of the *Proverbs*. Other parts of Scripture are like a rich *Mine*, where the precious *Ore* runs along in one continued *Vein*: But this is like a Heap of

Pearls; which, though they are looſe and unſtrung, are not therefore the leſs excellent or valuable.

The *Text* I have now read, is one of them, an entire Propoſition in it ſelf, without relation to, or dependance upon any Context.

The Diviſion of the Words. In it, we have theſe things conſiderable.

I. *Firſt*, The *Character* or *Periphraſis* of wicked and ungodly Men; and they are ſaid to be ſuch as *make a Mock at Sin.*

II. *Secondly*, Here is the Cenſure paſt upon them by the All-wiſe God, and the wiſeſt of Men; they are *Fools* for ſo doing; *Fools make a Mock at Sin.*

The Words are plain and obvious; only the Phraſe of making a *Mock*, may ſeem ſubject to ſome ambiguity, and various ac-

acceptations; and indeed the *Scripture* uſeth it in divers Senſes. Sometimes it ſignifies an abuſing of others, by violent and leud Actions: So we read that *the Hebrew Servant*, ſays *Potipher's* Wife, *came in unto me to mock me.* Gen. 39. 17. Sometimes it ſignifies an expoſing of Men to Shame and Diſhonour: So the wiſe Man tells us, *Wine is a mocker.* Prov. 20. 1. Sometimes it ſignifies an impoſing upon the Credulity of others things that ſeem incredible and impoſſible: So we read in *Geneſis*, when *Lot* had declared to his Sons in Law the Deſtruction of *Sodom*, it is ſaid, *He ſeemed unto them as one that mocked.* Gen. 19. 14. Sometimes it is taken for a failing in our Promiſes, and thereby defeating, and fruſtrating the Expectations of others: And thus *Herod* is ſaid to be *mocked by the wiſe Men, in* Matth. 2. 16

Matth. 2. 16. But none of these are at all congruous to our present purpose, nor applicable to the Words of the *Text*.

What's meant by Mocking.

There are therefore two other acceptations of this Expression, frequently occurring in the *Holy Scriptures*.

I. *First*, This Word *Mock* is commonly taken for scoffing, or bitter taunting at others. Thus our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ suffered the Flouts and Derisions of an insolent Rabble, who *set him at nought, and mocked him*, as St. *Luke* speaks: Thus those blessed *Martyrs* and *Confessors*, that followed his steps, are said to have indured *the trial of cruel Mockings*, as the Apostle tells us. And indeed this is the difference between a wise Reprover, and a bitter Mocker; that the Words of the one are like

Luk. 23. 11.

Heb. 11. 36.

Balm,

Balm, both ſoft and ſanative; but the Words of the other are like *ſharp Swords*, which cut deep into the Minds of Men, and commonly make them rankle into Hatred and Malice. And doubtleſs there are very many Spirits can ſooner put up an injury done them, than a cutting bitter ſcoff; becauſe nothing expreſſeth ſo much Contempt, nor ſhews how deſpicable we account them, as a fleering Gibe.

Secondly, Mocking may be taken for ſlighting, and making no account of, looking upon things or Perſons, as trivial and inconſiderable. And thus it is uſed in *Job*, where the *Horſe* is ſaid to *mock at fear*, when he ruſheth into the Battel, and is not terrified; but rather enraged by all the Horrors of War, *When the Quiver rattleth againſt him, the* Job 39. 2. II.

glittering Spear and the Shield. And so it is said of the *Leviathan*, *Job* 41. 29. *He laugheth at the shaking of the Spear, for he esteemeth Iron as Straw, and Brass as rotten Wood.*

Job 41. 29.

Now in either of these two Senses may the Words of the *Text* be taken; when they tell us, they are *Fools that make a Mock at Sin.*

A twofold Consideration of Sin.

For Sin may be considered, either as committed by others, or as committed by our selves; and it is egregious *Folly* to make a *Mock* of either, so as to sport at the one, or to slight the other.

I. *First*, They are *Fools* that make a *Mock* at other Men's Sins, so as to turn them into a Matter of Jest and Raillery.

II. *Secondly*, They are *Fools* that make a *Mock* at their own Sins, so as to think the Commission of them

them a ſlight and inconſiderable thing.

I ſhall very briefly ſpeak of the *Firſt*, and ſo paſs on unto the *Second* Particular.

Firſt therefore, They are *Fools* that make a *Mock* at other Men's Sins, ſo as to make them a matter of Mirth and Paſtime. This indeed is Sport for *Devils*, all whoſe Recreation, and Helliſh Solace, is the Sin and Wickedneſs of Men. The Damnation of Souls is the Sport of Hell: And Thou who canſt rejoice in their Joy, deſerveſt likewiſe to howl under their Woes and Torments. We juſtly condemn it, as a moſt barbarous and inhumane Cuſtom amongſt the ancient *Romans*, who brought many ſelected Pairs of miſerable Men into their publick *Theatres*, only to delight the Spectators with

I. *They are Fools that make a Mock at other Men's Sins.*

with their Blood and Death. But this was an innocent Recreation in compariſon of thine, who takeſt pleaſure to ſee thy poor Brother wounding and ſtabbing, yea damning his precious Soul. Go laugh at a wrethed Man upon the *Rack*, or upon the *Wheel*; Laugh at the odd diſtorted Poſtures of *Epilepticks*, or the Convulſe Motions of *Dying* and *Expiring Men*; Sport thy ſelf with their writh'd Looks, and antick Shapes of Miſery: This is far more civil, more humane, more pious, than to make thoſe Sins thy Mirth, which will be thy Brother's Eternal Woe and Anguiſh. What thinkeſt thou? Couldſt thou look into Hell, that place of Torment? Couldſt thou ſee there all the Engines of God's Juſtice, and the Devil's Cruelty, ſet on work in the eternal

nal Torture of thoſe, who perhaps once made as light of their own Sins, as thou doſt of other Men's; wouldſt thou think this a pleaſant Spectacle? Wouldſt thou ſport and divert thy ſelf to ſee how they wallow in Fire and Brimſtone, or how they circle and twiſt themſelves in unquenchable Flames? Certainly ſuch a Sight as this would affect thee with a cold Horrour, and a ſhivering Dread: And how then canſt thou ſport thy ſelf to ſee thy Brother damning himſelf, ſince it would fright thee to ſee him damned? Believe it, Sirs; The Sins that now abound in the World challenge our Tears and Pity: We ought to mourn and repent for thoſe who do not, who will not repent for themſelves. It is a ſad, and a doleful Sight to ſee ſo

many

many every where diſhonour God, diſgrace their Natures, and deſtroy their Souls; to ſee ſome come reeling home, diſguis'd in all the brutiſh Shapes that Drunkenneſs can put upon them, ready to diſcharge their Vomit in the Face of every one they meet: Others frantick with Wrath and Rage, &, like a Company of Mad
Prov. 26. 18. Men, flinging about *Fire-brands*, *Arrows*, and *Death*: To ſee ſuch woeful Transformations, and the dire Effects that Sin and Wickedneſs have cauſed in the World; certainly he that can entertain himſelf with Mirth at theſe things, hath not only forſworn his *Religion*, but his *Humanity*; and may, with much more Reaſon, make the Miſeries of poor diſtracted People, chain'd up in *Bedlam*, to become his Sport and Paſtime.

I know

I know it will be here pretended, that ſurely it can be no ſuch great Crime to explode and hiſs Sin off the *Stage*; nay, it were a proper Means to keep Men from being generally ſo wicked, could we but make Wickedneſs more ridiculous in them.

But, alas! *Vice* is now-a-days grown too impudent to be laughed out of Countenance; and thoſe Methods of a ſcurrilous Mockery, which ſome plead for, as rendring Vice ridiculous, have, I doubt, only made it the more taking and ſpreading, and encouraged others to be the more openly ſinful, by teaching them to be the more wittily vile and wicked. Few will be deterred from ſinning, when they think they ſhall but gratifie others, by making Sport for them; and ſtir

up,

up, not their Indignation and Abhorrence, but their Mirth and Laughter. 'Tis true, we read that *Elijah* mock'd the Idolatrous Worſhippers of *Baal*, and his Scoffs and Taunts at them were very biting and *ſarcaſtical*, and cut them much deeper than they are ſaid to cut themſelves: But this he did in a ſerious and zealous reproving of their Sins, not in a jocular and ſportive Merriment. There are two things in Sin, Impiety and Folly; we may lawfully enough ſcorn the one, while we are ſure to hate and deteſt the other: And a due Mixture of both theſe together, Scorn and Deteſtation, are very fit to enkindle our Zeal for God, and may oftentimes be a requiſite Temper for him who is to reprove confident and audacious Sinners. But to laugh and ſport

at others Wickedneſs, and to make the Guilt & Shame of others our Mirth and Recreation, is both unchriſtian, and inhumane; and we may as well laugh at their Damnation, as at that which will lead them to it. Thus to make a Mock at Sin, is to make our very Mocks to be our Sins; and argues us, not only profane, but fooliſh; for this is to laugh and rejoyce at our own Stain and Diſhonour, and to abuſe our own Nature, that Nature which is common to us, as well as others; that Nature which, were it not debaſed with Sin, renders us but a little lower than the *Angels*.

What a fair and glorious Creature was Man, before Sin debaſed and ſullied him! A Friend to his God, Lord of the Creation, made a little lower than the

the *Angels*, being a-kin to them, though of a younger Houſe, and meaner Extract, adorn'd with all both natural and divine Perfections, till Sin deſpoil'd him of his Excellency, and made him who was almoſt *equal to the Angels*, worſe than the very *Brutes* that periſh, ſottiſh and miſerable. And canſt thou laugh and ſport thy ſelf at that which hath ruin'd and undone thee, as well as others? Thy Nature is blemiſh'd and corrupted as much as theirs. When we look abroad in the World, and obſerve the abominable Wickedneſſes that are every where committed, the Murthers, Uncleanneſſes, Blaſphemies, Drunkenneſs, and all thoſe Prodigies of Impiety that every where ſwarm amongſt Men; how *by Lying, Stealing,*
Hoſ. 4. 2. *Swearing, and Committing Adultery;*

they

they break out, until Blood toucheth Blood. What elſe ſee we now in all this, but the woful Effects of our own corrupt Nature: Here we ſee our ſelves unbowelled, and diſcover what we our ſelves are, at the price of other Men's Sins; *For as in Water, Face anſwereth unto Face, ſo doth the Heart of Man to Man.* Prov. 27. 19. We have therefore more reaſon to lament the Sins and Miſcarriages of others, than to make a Sport and Mock at their Wickedneſs, ſince we our ſelves are the very ſame, and prone enough, without the Reſtraining Grace of God, either to imitate, or exceed them.

Hence then, *Firſt*, Conſider what an accurſed, horrid thing it is to tempt others to ſin, only that thou mayeſt afterwards make Sport with them, and raiſe a *Scene* of Mirth out of the Ruins I. *Uſe* *Shews the Evil of tempting others to ſin.*

of their Souls. I wiſh this were not as common a Practice, as it is damnable. See what dreadful Woes God denounceth againſt ſuch, by the Prophet: *Woe unto him that giveth his Neighbour Drink; that putteſt thy Bottle to him, and makeſt him drunken alſo, that thou mayeſt look upon his Nakedneſs*; his Shame and Diſhonour. *Thou art filled with Shame, for Glory: Drink thou alſo, and let thy Foreſkin be uncovered; the Cup of the Lord's Right Hand ſhall be turned unto thee, and ſhameful Spewing ſhall be on thy Glory.* Hence have theſe *Devils* (for that Name belongs to them who do his Work) invented all thoſe Artifices of Exceſs and Drunkenneſs, to draw on others to debauch themſelves, and their Reaſon, that they may have Matter to laugh at their ſottiſh Actions, and

Habak. 2. 15, 16.

and to boaſt how many they have made to fall under the Puiſſance of their Riots. But certainly, if there be an *Hell*, as it is certain there is; or if that *Hell* were not made in vain, as it was not; theſe wretched Sinners can expect nothing elſe, but to have their Portion therein with thoſe *Devils*, whoſe induſtrious Factors they have been: And there the Cup of God's Right Hand, a Cup of pure Wrath, and unmix'd Fury, ſhall be given them, and they be forced to drink it off, to the very Dregs and Bottom of it, ſpewing out Fire and Brimſtone eternally.

II. *Uſe* *Shews the Wickedneſs of thoſe that ſin, only to tempt others to ſin.*

Secondly, Hence think how deſperately impious, wicked Wretches they are, who ſin only to make others Sport; that buffoon themſelves into *Hell*, and purchaſe the Pleaſing others

with the dreadful Damnation of their own Souls: And yet, How frequent is this in the World? How many are there, that will neither ſpare *God*, nor *Heaven*, nor *Scripture*, nor *Religion*, nor common Modeſty, if they come but in the way of a Jeſt? Nothing, how ſacred, how venerable ſoever it be, can eſcape them, if they can but turn it into Drollery.

I need not mention what *Tropes* and *Metaphors* Men have found out to talk laſciviouſly by; almoſt every one is perfect in that piece of Rhetorick: Nor what ſtrange, monſtrous Lies ſome will aver openly, to raiſe either Mirth or Wonder in Company. And that which is worſt of all is, that now the *Holy Bible* is become a mere Jeſt-Book with them, a Common Place for

for Wit, and merry Diſcourſe; and the *Devil* again ſpeaks *Scripture* out of theſe Men's Mouths; they know no more of it, than what they abuſe; and all their Meditations and Comments upon it, are only how ſuch and ſuch Paſſages may be ingeniouſly perverted, and turned into Burleſque, to heighten the Mirth of the next profane Company they meet. Impious Wretches, that dare to violate the moſt tremendous Myſteries of Religion, and expoſe their God to Scorn, his Oracles to Contempt, and their own Souls to Eternal Perdition; only for a little Grinning and Sneering of a Company of vain; yea, mad *Fools*, who think they commence Wits by applauding Blaſphemy! But theſe Wits, as they are profane and impious, ſo they prove

themſelves very Fools, thus to ſport themſelves to death: Their Laughter is rather ſpaſmical and convulſive, than joyous; a *Riſus Sardonicus*, cauſed by Venom and Poyſon: They go down merrily to Hell, and frolick themſelves into Perdition.

And thus I have done with the *firſt* ſort of *Fools*, namely, thoſe that make a Sport and *Mock* at other Men's Sins.

II. *They are Fools that make a Mock at their own Sins.*

The *Second* Particular is to ſhew, that they are *Fools* who make a *Mock* at their own Sins, ſo as to think the Commiſſion of them but a ſlight, inconſiderable Matter. And here I ſhall ſhew you,

I. *Firſt*, That wicked Men do generally account Sin a ſmall, ſlight Matter.

II. *Secondly*, What it is that induceth and perſuades them to account ſo ſlight of it. *Thirdly*,

Thirdly, Their groſs and inexcuſable *Folly* for ſo accounting of it. III.

Firſt, That wicked Men do generally account Sin a ſmall, inconſiderable Matter, may appear from theſe three Things. I.

I. Slight Provocations and eaſie Temptations, are ſufficient to make them ruſh boldly into the Commiſſion of Sin: Any ſlight inconſiderable Gain, and tranſitory, fading, waſhy Pleaſure; yea oftentimes, a meer Gallantry and Humour of Sinning, is enough to make them venture upon any Crime, that the Devil, or their own wicked Hearts ſhall ſuggeſt to them: Yea thoſe very Things, for which they would ſcarce ſuffer a Hair of their Heads to be twitch'd off, are yet forcible enough, to perſuade them to lie or ſwear, 1. *Slight Temptations make ſome Men ſin.*

Sins that murder and deſtroy their precious Souls for ever! What is this but a plain Demonſtration, that they account Sin a mere Trifle, and look upon it as a ſmall and ſlight thing to offend the moſt high God.

2. *Hard to work Sinners to a true Sorrow for Sin.*

II. It is very hard and difficult to work theſe Men to any true Sorrow and Compunction for their Sins: Turn the Mouth of all the terrible Threatnings that God hath denounced in his holy Word againſt them, and let them thunder out all the Woes and Curſes that are in the Magazine of God's Juſtice againſt them, yet theſe wicked Wretches are not ſtartled at it; but ſtill hold faſt their Confidence and Boldneſs, when they have loſt their Innocency and Integrity, and cannot, nor will not be perſuaded that God ſhould

ſhould be ſo angry and incenſed for ſuch ſmall matters.

III. If they are at all moved with theſe things, yet they think that a ſlight and formal *Repentance* will ſuffice to make amends for all: They pacifie their Conſciences, and think they appeaſe God alſo, by crying him Mercy; and find it as eaſie a matter to repent of their Sins, as it is to commit them. And therefore certainly theſe Men muſt needs have very ſlight Thoughts of Sin, who can be ſo eaſily tempted to commit it, and are ſo hard to be brought to repent of it; or if they do, yet is it ſo ſlightly and ſuperficially, as if they feared the Amends would be greater than the Injury. 3.

I come now to the *Second* Thing, and that is, to ſhew what it is that induceth and perſuadeth II. *Cauſes of Sinners making light of Sin.*

ſuadeth wicked Men to make ſo light of their Sins.

Now there are theſe two things that make Sinners to account their Sins ſlight and trivial Matters.

1. *Sinners not being exemplarily puniſhed, cauſes them to make light of Sin.*

I. Becauſe they ſee ſo few Inſtances of God's dread Wrath and Vengeance executed on Sinners in this Life; and thoſe rare ones that are extant and viſible, they impute rather to Chance, than to the Retribution of Divine Juſtice: And therefore, upon their own Impunity, and the Impunity of others, they conclude, that certainly Sin is no ſuch heinous thing as ſome ſowre, tetrical People would fain perſuade the World to believe: And ſo they cry *Peace, Peace, to themſelves, though they go on in the Frowardneſs of their Hearts, adding Iniquity to Sin.* Because God ſo long

Deut. 29 19.

winks

winks at them, they conclude him blind, or, at leaſt, that he doth not much diſallow thoſe Sins which he doth not preſently puniſh. Indeed, it would be ſomewhat difficult to *anſwer* this *Argument*, were this preſent Life the appointed Time of Recompence. No, but God reſerveth his Wrath and Vengeance to a more publick, and more dreadful Execution of it, than any can be in this Life. Though now thou feeleſt no Effects of God's Wrath, yet, believe it, the Storm is but all this while gathering: But when thou lancheſt forth into the boundleſs Ocean of Eternity, then, and perhaps never before then, will it break upon thee in a Tempeſt of Fury, and drown thy Soul in Perdition and Deſtruction.

II. Ano-

2. *Sinners make light of Sin, becauſe it is no real Injury to God.*

II. Another thing that makes wicked Men think ſo ſlight of Sin, is that it cannot affect God with any real Injury; for as he is not benefited by our Services, ſo he is not wronged by our Iniquities. 'Tis true, could our Sins reach God, could they dethrone him, or rend off any of his glorious Attributes from his immutable Eſſence, there might then be great Reaſon why God ſhould ſo ſeverely revenge them, and we for ever deteſt and abhor them: But ſince his Glory is free from any Stain, and his Being from any Wrong and Prejudice, our Sins are nothing to him, nor is there any Reaſon we ſhould judge them heinous and provoking.

'Tis true, *O Sinner*, thy Sins can never invade God's Eſſence; that is infinitely above the Attempts

tempts of Men or Devils, but yet every wicked Wretch would, if he could, dethrone God; Sinners would not have him be ſo holy, nor ſo juſt as he is; not ſo holy in hating of their Sins, nor ſo juſt in puniſhing of them; that is, they would not have him to be God; for it is neceſſary that God ſhould be as he is. Sinners do really contradict God's Purity, rebel againſt his Sovereignty, violate his Commands, defie his Juſtice, provoke his Mercy, deſpiſe his Threatnings, and hinder the Manifeſtations of his Glory to the World: And is all this nothing? Every Sinner hath ſo much Poyſon and Venom in him, that he would even ſpit it in the Face of God himſelf, if he could reach him: But becauſe God is in himſelf ſecure from

from their impotent Aſſaults, Sin ſhews its Spight againſt him in what it can; defaceth his Image where-ever it comes, aboliſheth all Structures and Lineaments of God in the Soul, and would baniſh his Name, his Fear, his Worſhip from off the Face of the whole Earth: And therefore thou who art guilty of this Rebellion againſt the great Majeſty of Heaven, canſt thou yet think thy Sins to be ſlight and inconſiderable, and not worth either the Cognizance, or the Vengeance of the Almighty? Believe it, the *Day* is coming, and will not tarry, when that Guilt which thou now carrieſt ſo peaceably in thy Boſom, and which, like a frozen and benumb'd *Serpent*, ſtirrs not, nor ſtings not, ſhall, when heated with the Flames of Hell, fly in thy

thy Face, and appear in all its native and genuine Deformities and Horrour, and overwhelm thy Soul with Everlaſting Anguiſh and Torment; and then, but too late, then wilt thou exclaim againſt thy ſelf, as being worſe than a *Fool*, or Mad-man, for thinking ſo ſlightly of, and making a *Mock* at that which hath eternally ruin'd and deſtroyed thee.

And having thus ſhew'd you briefly, that wicked Men do make light of Sin, and the Inducements that tempt them to it. I ſhall now, in the

Third place, ſhew you their great and inexcuſable *Folly* in ſo doing. And certainly never was any inſenſate Man, never any that was wholly abandon'd by his Reaſon and Underſtanding, guilty of a greater *Folly* than this is: For, I. is

III. *The Folly of Sinners in making light of Sin, appears in that they*

1. *Hope to repent of it.*

I. Is it not moſt egregious *Folly* and Madneſs for any to do that, which yet they hope they ſhall live to repent that ever they did it? This is ſuch a *Folly*, as all the Extravagances of *Fools* could never match; and yet this moſt wicked Men are guilty of: They boldly ruſh into Sin, only upon this preſumptuous Confidence, that they may hereafter be ſorry that now they did it. In which their Folly is doubly notorious, in that

1. 1. They venture upon a certain Guilt, in hope of an uncertain Repentance. And,

2. 2. In that they take up their unprofitable Sins upon ſo great and burthenſome an Intereſt.

1. *Sinners Folly great, in venturing upon a certain Guilt, in hopes of an uncertain Repentance.*

1. In that they venture upon a certain Guilt, in hopes of an uncertain Repentance. For either God may cut thee off, O Sinner,

Sinner, in the very Act of that Sin which thou intendeſt to *repent* of hereafter: Or, if he afford thee Time for *Repentance*, he may withold his Grace, and in his juſt and righteous, but yet fearful Judgment, ſeal thee up under Hardneſs and Impenitency, that thou ſhalt *go on, treaſuring up to thy ſelf Wrath againſt the Day of Wrath.* And if either of theſe, through the righteous Judgment of God, ſhould happen unto thee, what a deplorable *Fool* wilt thou prove thy ſelf to be, that ſinneſt out of Hopes of Repentance, and of a Repentance which perhaps will never be granted? Alas! How many hath God, in his ſignal Vengeance, cut off, by ſome remarkable ſtroke, with an *Oath*, or *Curſe*, or *Blaſphemy* in their Mouths, ſcarce fully pronounced? Rom. 2 5.

ced? How many, with their drunken Vomits gogling in their very Throats: How many, while their Souls have been burning with their luſtful Embraces, have even then been caſt into Hell, and burnt up with Everlaſting Fire? Or, if Vengeance ſhould ſpare thee for a while, O Sinner, yet thou knoweſt not how ſoon it will ſtrike thee: It is great Folly to expect the Warning of a ſick Bed; *Death* often ſurpriſes by ſudden Caſualties, or by ſome Diſeaſes as ſudden as Caſualties; and there are many Ways of *Dying*, beſides *Conſumptions*, *Agues*, and *Dropſies*, the lingring Fore-runners of an approaching Diſſolution. But if God ſhould caſt thee down upon a ſick Bed, he may juſtly viſit thee, who haſt neglected thy Soul in thy Health, with ſuch Diſtem-

Diſtempers as may make thee not only unfit, but ſuch as may render thee uncapable of doing thy laſt kind Office for it. It is Folly to expect the Admonition of Old Age: Alas! the *Almond-Tree* doth not every where *flouriſh*; and it is not one, to many Thouſands, that lay down an *Hoary Head* in the Bed of the Grave. But grant thou couldſt be aſſured of the Continuance of thy Life, yet is it not egregious *Folly* to ſin in hope of repenting, when every Act of Sin will make thy *Repentance* the more difficult, if not impoſſible? The older thou groweſt, ſtill the more deſperate is thy Caſe; for thy Sins will be the more rooted and habituated in thee, and thy Heart the more hardned to reſiſt the Grace of God: So that, upon all Accounts, thy Repentance is

Eccleſ. 12. 5.

Prov. 16. 31.

moſt uncertain; and the longer thou continueſt in Sin, ſtill the more unlikely and improbable. And then judge, thou thy ſelf, whether it be not extream Madneſs and Folly to make ſo light, or no Account of Sinning, becauſe thou makeſt account of Repenting. But

2. *Sinners great Folly to purchaſe the Pleaſures of Sin with a bitter Repentance.*

2. Suppoſe it were moſt infallibly certain that thou ſhalt *repent*, yet none but *Fools* will take up the Pleaſures of Sin upon the Sorrow, Anguiſh, and Bitterneſs of a true and hearty *Repentance*. Doſt thou ſeriouſly conſider what *Repentance* is? It is not a tranſitory Wiſh, a warm Sigh, or a languiſhing *Lord have Mercy*, in a Diſtreſs, or on a ſick Bed; (and yet even theſe cannot be without judging and condemning themſelves for *Fools*, when they ſinned:) No, but

Repen-

Repentance is the breaking of the Heart, a rending of the very Soul in pieces: The uſual Preparatives to it are ghaſtly Fears and Terrours, ſharp and dreadful Convictions, that will even ſearch thy very Bowels, break thy Bones, and burn up thy very Marrow within thee. More eſpecially doth God deal thus terribly with veterane, old, confirmed Sinners, making *Repentance* more bitter to them, than to others, that they may ſee and confeſs themſelves *Fools*, in indulging themſelves in their Sins, in hopes of repenting for them. Say then, when the *Devil* and thine own Luſts tempt thee to any Sin; ſay, If I commit this Sin, either I ſhall repent of it, or I ſhall not; if I never repent of it, as it is a hazard whether I ſhall or no, what is there

in Sin, that can recompence the everlaſting Pain of Damnation? If I ſhall repent, what is there in the Sin, that can recompence the Anguiſh and Bitterneſs of *Repentance?* This is ſuch an unanſwerable *Dilemma*, that all the Craft and Subtilty of Hell can never ſolve. And if we would but always keep this fixed in our Minds, it were impoſſible that ever we ſhould make ſlight of Sin. While thou thus argueſt, thou argueſt ſolidly and wiſely; but to ſay I will ſin, becauſe perhaps I may repent, is quite below the meaneſt Capacity that ever own'd the leaſt Glimpſe of Senſe and Reaſon.

2. *Sin will make Sinners a publick Scorn to the whole World.*

II. Is it not *Folly* to make a *Mock* at that which will be ſure to pay thee home, and to make a publick *Mock* and Scorn of thee to the whole World? How many

many have their Sins and Vices made infamous among Men? They are a Shame, and a Reproach to all that are but of a civil and ſober Converſe; and as much loſt to Reputation, as they are to Vertue? But however, certainly all wicked and ungodly Men ſhall be made a publick Scorn and Deriſion to all the World, both God, Angels, and Men: God will *mock* at them, he tells them ſo expreſly, for ſo the Wiſe Man ſpeaks; *Becauſe you have ſet at nought all my Counſel, and would none of my Reproof; I alſo will laugh at your Calamity, and mock when your Fear cometh; when your Fear cometh as a Deſolation, and your Deſtruction cometh like a Whirlwind.* All their Sins and Deeds of Wickedneſs ſhall then be expoſed to the open View and Prov 1.25,26.

Contempt of *Saints* and *Angels*, who ſhall ſubſcribe to the righteous Doom of their Condemnation. *Devils* will then upbraid their *Folly*, and triumph that they have outwitted them into the ſame moſt miſerable and deplorable State with themſelves. Think now, *O Sinner!* How wilt thou be able to hold up thy guilty Head, and thy amazed and confounded Face? Whither, Oh whither canſt thou cauſe thy Shame to go, when Men and Angels ſhall point and hiſs at thee, and thy *Folly* ſhall be proclaimed as loud as the laſt Trumpet, which Heaven and Earth, and all the World ſhall hear?

3. *The Folly of Sinners to damn their Souls for Sin.*

III. Is it not the Fooliſhneſs of *Folly* it ſelf, to make light of that which will for ever damn thee? Art thou ſuch an *Idiot*, as to

to account *Hell* a Trifle, and *Damnation* it ſelf a ſlight Matter? What is it then that makes thee think Sin ſo ſmall and trifling a thing? For *Hell*, and *Death*, and Eternal Wrath are certainly entail'd upon it. Conſider what a moſt cutting Reflexion it will be to thee in *Hell*, when thou ſhalt for ever cry out upon, and curſe thy ſelf for a wretched *Fool*, that ever thou ſhouldſt make ſlight of thoſe Sins which would damn thee. What was there in them, for which thou haſt forfeited Heaven, and Everlaſting Happineſs, but only a little impure brutiſh Pleaſure? And now that it is paſt and gone, what remains of them, but only the bitter Remembrances? Certainly thou wilt ten thouſand times, and for ever call thy ſelf an accurſed *Fool* for ſo doing, when it is too late

late to help it. Be perſuaded therefore now to be wiſe betimes for your Souls; elſe you alſo will, when there is no Redreſs, curſe your own *Folly*, that hath brought upon you all thoſe Extremities of Woe and Anguiſh.

FINIS.

True Happineſs.

A

SERMON

PREACHED AT

S. LAWRENCE JEWRY,

June the 17th, 1690.

ON

REVEL. XXII. XIV.

BY

EZEKIEL HOPKINS,

Late Lord Biſhop of *London-Derry.*

LONDON,

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True Happineſs.

A

SERMON

PREACHED, &c.

REV. 22. 14.

Bleſſed are they that do his Commandments, that they may have Right to the Tree of Life, and may enter through the Gates into the City.

THeſe Words which I have now read, conſiſt of theſe two Parts.:

Firſt, A Propoſition. And, *Secondly*, A Proof of this Propoſition. *Diviſion of the Words.*

Firſt,

Firſt, A Propoſition, in theſe Words, that *They that do God's Commandments, are bleſſed.*

Secondly, Here is the Proof of this Propoſition, in theſe Words, that *They have a Right to the Tree of Life, and ſhall enter through the Gates into the City.*

It is the Connection of both theſe together, that I intend chiefly to ſpeak unto. Only give me leave, as a Preliminary to the enſuing Diſcourſe, to ſhew you what is contained in the firſt and great Word in my *Text*; and that is the Word *Bleſſed.*

There is therefore a twofold *Beatitude*, or *Bleſſedneſs*: The one is *perfect* and *conſummate*; the other *initial* and *incompleat.* The former is the Complection of all Good perfective of our Natures, and our entire and ſatisfying Enjoyment of it. This Bleſſedneſs

now

now is only attainable in Heaven; for God alone is the Centre of all Good, and all the Good that is deſirable in this World, are but ſo many Lines drawn from the Centre, to the utmoſt Circumference of the Creation. There is nothing that can ſupply the Wants, perform the Hopes, fulfil the Deſires, without Confinement circumſcribe, without Cloying ſatisfie the moſt enlarged Capacities of a Rational Soul, but only that God who is infinitely, univerſally, and indefectively good; and therefore he alone is our objective Happineſs: and our formal Happineſs is our Relation to, and Union with this All-comprehenſive and Incomprehenſible Good. Our Aſſimilation to him, and Participation from him, of all thoſe Perfections which our Natures

are

are capable of enjoying, but our Underſtandings not now capable of knowing. But this *conſummate Bleſſedneſs*, is reſerved for our unknown Reward hereafter, and is not that which my *Text* here ſpeaks of.

There is therefore an *imperfect* and *initial Bleſſedneſs*, which conſiſts in a Preparation for, and a Tendency unto the other: As thoſe are ſaid to be accurſed, whoſe Sins and Vices prepare them for Eternal Perdition; ſo thoſe likewiſe are ſaid to be bleſſed, whoſe Grace and Holineſs prepare them for Eternal Bliſs and Happineſs.

Such as do God's Commandments are bleſſed in Four Reſpects.

Now ſuch as theſe are bleſſed in a fourfold Reſpect.

1. *In the Seed.*

First, They are bleſſed, *in Semine*, in the Seed: *They go forth bearing precious Seed*, and ſhall doubtleſs rejoyce in a plentiful Harveſt,

Harveſt: So the *Pſalmiſt* tells us, *Pſal.* 97. 11. *Light is ſown for the Righteous, and Gladneſs for the Upright in Heart.* And though they often appear Clods of Earth plowed up, harrowed, and broken with Affliction; yet is there that bleſſed Seed caſt into them, that will certainly ſprout up to Immortality, and Eternal Life, as all the Beauties of a Flower lie couched in a ſmall unſightly Seed: And ſo truly Grace is Glory in the Seed; and Glory is but Grace full blown. Pſal. 97. 11.

II. *In the Firſt Fruits.*

Secondly, They are bleſſed *in primitiis*, in the Firſt Fruits. They have already received ſome part of their Eternal Felicity, in the Graces and Conſolations of the *Holy Ghoſt*; which are therefore called *the Firſt Fruits of the Spirit*, Rom. 8. 23. by the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 8. 23. and *the Earneſt of the Spirit*, 2 Cor. 1. 22. Rom. 8. 23. 2 Cor. 1. 22.

Epheſ. 1. 14. and *the Earneſt of our Inheritance, Epheſ.* 1. 14. Now, as the Earneſt is always part of the Bargain, and the Firſt Fruits are always of the ſame kind with the whole Harveſt, ſo is it here; the Graces and Comforts of the *Holy Ghoſt*, are the very ſame now, that they ſhall be in Heaven it ſelf: And therefore the Epheſ. 1. 3. *Apoſtle bleſſeth God, who hath bleſſed us with ſpiritual Bleſſings in heavenly Things in Chriſt.* Better indeed they ſhall be in Heaven, but not other: Here our Graces often languiſh under the Load and Preſſure of Corruption, but in Heaven they ſhall be for ever vigorous and triumphant: Here our Waters of Comfort often fail us, our Ciſtern is often dried up, and our Bottle ſpent; but in Heaven we ſhall for ever lie at the Fountain of Living Waters, and take in

in Divine Communications, as they immediately flow from the Divine Eſſence, without having them deadned or flatted in the Conveyance. But yet, both by theſe imperfect Graces and Comforts, we do truly and properly enjoy God; the Enjoyment of whom in any meaſure is Happineſs, but in the higheſt meaſure is Heaven it ſelf. If therefore the Maſs and Lump be Bleſſedneſs, the Firſt Fruits muſt be bleſſed alſo.

III. *Thirdly*, They are bleſſed *in Spe*, in Hope; whence it is called by the Apoſtle, *That bleſſed Hope*. A bleſſed Hope it is, becauſe that which we hope for is *Eternal Bleſſedneſs*. The Hope of worldly Things is commonly more tormenting, than the Enjoyment of them can be ſatisfying. It is an Hope that vitiates and deflowers its Object, and ſo

Bleſſed in Hope. Titus 2. 13.

mightily over-rates them in the Fancy, that when they come to paſs, our Hope is rather fruſtrated than accompliſhed: And were it not for that Impatience, which is the conſtant Attendant of this Hope, it would be a Problem hard to be reſolved, whether Expectation or Fruition were the more eligible Eſtate. Vain therefore and wretched muſt needs be the Hopes of thoſe things, which cannot anſwer what is expected from them; like a Golden Dream to a Beggar, or the Dream of a furniſh'd Table to one that is hunger-ſtarv'd. But now the Hopes of Heaven can never impoveriſh the Glories of it, for they are infinite and inexhauſtible; and God hath laid up for his, that which the Heart of Man cannot conceive.

A Chriſtian's Hope hath two Prerogatives above any worldly Hope. *Two Properties of a Chriſtian's Hope.*

One is, That it may attain to a full and final Aſſurance, as the *Apoſtle* ſpeaks to the *Hebrews*; where he calls it, *The full Aſſurance of Hope unto the End.* Heb. 6. 11. An Hope it is, becauſe the Object of it is a future Good deſired and expected: But yet it is an Hope that is joined with a full Aſſurance of the Event; an Hope that may flower up into ſuch a Certainty, as to have no Mixture of Fear or Doubting in its Compoſition; but may be as ſure of the Heavenly Inheritance, as if our Reverſion were already in actual Poſſeſſion: Whereas Worldly Hope can never be ſecure, but ſome Providence or other may interpoſe, to diſappoint it.

The other *Prerogative* of a Chriſtian's Hope, is, that though it be thus fully aſſured, yet the Accompliſhment of it ſhall always have the ſweet Reliſh of Surpriſe and Wonder; for the Happineſs will be far greater than the Hope, and the Inheritance larger than the Expectation; whereas Earthly Hopes, if they grow to any degree of Confidence of Succeſs, upon Fruſtration they turn into Impatience and Rage: Or if perhaps they do ſucceed, the Sweetneſs of the Accompliſhment was long before ſuck'd out and devoured by our greedy Expectation; the *Game* is torn and eaten, before the *Hunſman* can come in. And upon both theſe Accounts, the pious and obedient Chriſtian is bleſſed in Hope: It is a bleſſed Hope that ſhall certainly be accom-

compliſhed; and a bleſſed Hope, the accompliſhing of which ſhall infinitely exceed our Expectations, and fill us, not with Shame, but Eternal Admiration and Wonder.

Fourthly, They are bleſſed in *Right* and *Title*: And upon this very Account eſpecially my *Text* pronounceth thoſe bleſſed *that do God's Commandments*, becauſe *they have a Right to the Tree of Life, and to enter in through the Gates into the City.* IV. *Bleſſed in Right.*

Now theſe Expreſſions, according to the Genius and Style of this whole Book, are myſtical and alluſive; and for the explaining of them I muſt ſhew,

Firſt, What the Tree of Life is. I.

Secondly, What is this City, into which they have a Right to enter. II.

Thirdly, What it is *to enter through the Gates into the City.* III.

IV. *Fourthly*, What *Right* it is which *Obedience to God's Commandments gives us to the Tree of Life, and to enter into the City.*

I. For the *Firſt* of theſe, *What this Tree of Life is.*

What the tree of Life is.

I anſwer, We find Mention made of this *Tree of Life* in two other places of this dark *Propheſie*; the one is in *Ver.* 2. of this *Chapter*; *On either Side of the River was there the Tree of Life, which bare twelve manner of Fruits, and yielded her Fruit every Month; and the Leaves of the Tree were for the healing of the Nations.* But this, very probably, may be only an Enigmatical Repreſentation of the Doctrine of the Goſpel; let us then conſult the other place, where Mention is made of this *Tree of Life*, and that is in *Rev.* 2. 7. *To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the Tree of Life, that is in the midſt*

Rev. 22. 2.

Rev. 2. 7.

midſt of the Paradiſe of God. Now this carries a plain Alluſion to that Deſcription of the Earthly Paradiſe of which we read, *Gen.* 2. 9. where it is ſaid, *God planted the Tree of Life in the midſt of the Garden.* Now this *Tree of Life* was ſo called, not that it had any natural Vertue to perpetuate Man's Life to Immortality, but only from its *typical* and *ſacramental* Uſe; God having appointed the Eating thereof as a Sign and Pledge of our Immortality, had we continued in our Innocency and Obedience. And therefore we find, that upon the Fall, God ſet a Guard upon this Tree, and as it were excommunicates ſinful *Adam* from partaking of this *Sacrament* of the *Covenant of Works*, which was both a Sign and Seal of Immortality; ſignifying thereby, that Sinners have Gen. 2. 9.

have no Right to Eternal Life, according to the Terms of the firſt Covenant: But this Right being again reſtored to us by Jeſus Chriſt, therefore they are pronounced bleſſed *that do God's Commandments*, becauſe *they have a Right to the Tree of Life*; that is, to that Eternal Life and Immortality which is brought to light by the Goſpel, and to which the *Tree of Life* in Paradiſe was a Sacrament and Emblem.

II. *What is meant by City.*

Secondly, Let us enquire what is *this City*, into which thoſe that *do God's Commandments ſhall enter*; and we have a moſt large and glorious Deſcription made of it in *Chap.* 21. of this Book, from *Ver.* 10. to the end of the *Chapter*. and, in brief, it is nothing elſe but *Heaven*; *the New* Jeruſalem, *that holy City, the City of the Living God, into which no unclean thing*

Rev. 21. 10, 14.

ſhall

ſhall enter. For without are Dogs, Rev. 22. 15.
and Sorcerers, and Whoremongers, and Idolaters, and whoſoever loveth and maketh a Lye, Chap. 22. 15.

Thirdly, What is it to enter through the Gates into this City. III. *What it is to enter through the Gates into the City.*

I anſwer, Though in the foregoing *Chapter* this *City* is deſcribed to have *twelve Gates, and in them the Names of the twelve Tribes of* Iſrael, to ſignifie to us, that through the Grace of the Goſpel, there is a Paſſage and an Inlet into Heaven for all thoſe that are true *Iſraelites*; yet, in true propriety of Speech, there is but one Way, and but one Gate to Heaven: Yea, and our Saviour tells us, that Way is narrow, and that Gate is ſtrait; for ſo we find his Words; *Strait is the* Matth. 7. 14.
Gate, and narrow is the Way, that leadeth unto Life, and few there be that find it. The Command-

ments

ments of God are this Gate to the Heavenly City, and the two Tables of the Law are the two Leaves of this Gate, through which every one muſt paſs, that hopes to be admitted into the *New Jeruſalem.* And although *David* ſeems to make this Gate very large, when he tells us, Pſal. 119 96. *Thy Commandments are exceeding broad*; yet that is only to be underſtood concerning the Authority of its Injunctions, not of the Liberty of its Indulgence. It is exceeding broad in the Extent of its preceptive Power, for it preſcribes Rules to all our Thoughts, Words, and Actions, and to every Circumſtance of each; but it is exceeding narrow and ſtrait in the Scope and Allowance that it gives us; that as ſoon may *a Camel go through the Eye of a Needle*, as we paſs through

through this Gate with the Burthen of one unmortified Luſt, or one unrepented Sin.

But why is it ſaid, *that thoſe that do God's Commandments may enter through the Gates into the City?* Can any enter in as a Thief, or a Robber, over the Wall? Or can any, as an Enemy, ſcale thoſe Eternal Ramparts, and take it by Invaſion? Queſt.

I anſwer; This is ſo expreſſed, to denote the free Acceſs and Admiſſion of thoſe into Heaven, who are careful to obey the Commandments of God upon Earth: Such as theſe are free born Citizens of Heaven; their whole Eſtate, their whole Traffick, all their Treaſure and Livelihood is laid up there; they are free *Denizens* by the Charter of the New Covenant, they may challenge Ingreſs as their Right Anſw.

and

and Due; and he who hath the *Keys of* David, *who openeth and no Man ſhutteth, and ſhutteth and no Man openeth*, opens the Door to theſe, and lets them into thoſe Eternal Manſions, which he hath purchaſed and prepared for them.

. Rev. 3 7.

IV. *What Right Obedience giveth to the Tree of Life, and to the Heavenly City.*

The *Fourth* and laſt Query to be enquired into, is concerning that Right which Obedience to God's Commands gives us unto this *Tree of Life*, and to this *Heavenly City*; that is, to Eternal Life and Glory. Now here I ſhall branch out this Query into Two; and ſo I ſhall ſhew you,

1. I. What that *Obedience* is, which gives us a *Right* to Heaven.

2. *What that Obedience is that is mentioned in the Text.* II. What that *Right* is, that this *Obedience* doth confirm.

I. What that *Obedience* is, that gives us a *Right* to Heaven.

I an-

I anſwer: It is not a Legal *Obedience*, or a perfect perſonal Righteouſneſs, that now gives us this *Right* to Heaven; this is very plain, becauſe to conſtitute this, it is neceſſary that there be both Original Purity in our Natures, which ſince the Fall is miſerably vitiated and corrupted; and alſo a Sinleſs Perfection in our Lives, in the conſtant Obſervation of every *Iota* of the Law, both as to its Extention, and Intention; that we obey it in every part and tittle of it, and that our Obedience unto every part be raiſed to the higheſt degree of Love, Zeal, and Charity. This *Title* was once good, but it is now loſt, by the Fall, in the common Ruine and Rubbiſh of Mankind; and he who hath not another *Title*, upon better and eaſier Terms, will find

1. *Not Legal Obedience.*

Che-

Cherubims, and the Flaming Sword of Divine Juſtice, ſet to guard the *Tree of Life* from his Approaches, as once they did from guilty *Adam*.

2. II. There is therefore another *Obedience* which gives a *Right* unto the *Tree of Life*; and that is an Evangelical Obedience; which, according to the Grace, Condeſcention, and Equity of the Goſpel, ſhall be accepted unto, and rewarded with Everlaſting Happineſs. Now this Evangelical Obedience conſiſts not indeed in Innocency and Perfection, but in ſincere Deſires, and proportionable Endeavours after it; when we ſtrive to the utmoſt to live holily, and to walk more ſtrictly with God, according to the Rules that he hath preſcribed us in his holy Word: And it conſiſts of two Parts;

It is Evangelical Obedience.

Mor-

Mortification of our corrupt and ſinful Affections, whereby we die daily unto Sin: And the *Spiritual Renovation*, and Quickning of our Graces, whereby we increaſe daily in ſpiritual Strength, and make farther Progreſſes in Holineſs and true Piety. And as it conſiſts of theſe two Parts, ſo hath it alſo theſe two Adjuncts.

1. The one is, True Repentance for our paſt Sins, reflecting upon them with Shame and Hatred, confeſſing and bewailing them with Sorrow and Contrition, and endeavouring, with all Earneſtneſs and Sincerity, to abſtain from the Commiſſion of the like for the future. 1.

2. The other is, A True and Lively Faith, whereby we rely on the Blood and Satisfaction of Jeſus Chriſt, for the Remiſſion of our Sins; and upon his perfect Righ- 2.

teouſneſs, and prevalent Interceſſion for the Acceptation and Reward of our imperfect Obedience.

Whoſoever doth thus ſincerely do the Commandments of God, univerſally and conſtantly, with his whole Strength and Mind, as though he expected to be ſaved by the Merits of his own Works; and yet, after all, doth ſo entirely rely on the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt for Salvation, as though he had never done any thing: He it is, and he alone, who hath this *Right unto the Tree of Life*, and *ſhall enter through the Gates into the Heavenly City.* For he doth his Commandments out of a ſincere Love; and God, who is Love, will own his Sincerity.

II. *Secondly*, I come now to conſider what that *Right* is, which this Evangelical Obedience, or doing the Commands of the Law, according

What Right Obedience gives to Eternal Life.

to

to the Favour and Mercy of the Goſpel, doth confer upon us, by virtue of which we may aſſuredly expect Eternal Life. And here,

I. It cannot be a *Right of Purchaſe, or Merit.* It is a fooliſh Preſumption, and intolerable Arrogance, to think we can deſerve any thing at the hands of God, unleſs it be his Wrath by our Sins. For, I. *Not a Right of Purchaſe.*

1. In all proper Merit there muſt be an Equivalence, or at leaſt a proportion of Worth between the Work, and the Reward: Which to imagine between our Obedience, and the Heavenly Glory, is to exalt the one infinitely too high, and to abaſe the other infinitely too low. What proportion is there between *a Cup of cold Water given to a Diſciple of Chriſt*, and that *Ocean* of Everlaſting Joy and Pleaſure, which ſhall be the Reward of it? A Man might more reaſonably expect to 1. *In Merit there muſt be an Equivalence.*

buy *Stars* with *Counters*, or to purchaſe a Kingdom with two Mites, than think to purchaſe the Heavenly Kingdom by paying down his Duties, and good Works, which are no way profitable unto God,

Job 22. 3. (*For is it any Pleaſure to the Almighty that thou art righteous; or is it any Gain unto him, that thou makeſt thy Way perfect?*) and bear no more proportion to the infinite Glory of Heaven, than a ſingle *Cypher* doth to the numberleſs *Sands* of the *Sea*.

2. *Grace to obey is given freely.*

2. The very Grace that enables us to do the Commandments of God, is freely beſtowed upon us by himſelf; and therefore the Obedience we perform unto him, merely by his own Aſſiſtance, cannot be ſaid (without a grand Impropriety) to merit any Reward from him. Such kind of Merit is but an idle and frivolous pretence: For certainly, he who gives me Money

Money to buy an Eſtate of him, doth as freely give me that Eſtate, as if I had never bought it of him, but he had immediately beſtowed the Land upon me, and not the Summ of Money.

3. All our *Obedience* is imperfect, and therefore, if it deſerve any thing, it is only Puniſhment for the Defects and Failures of it. This Coin is not currant, this Metal is baſe and adulterated, the King's Stamp defaced and obliterated, the Edges clip'd, and the Superſcription, which ſhould be on both ſides *Holineſs to the Lord*, is on the Reverſe at leaſt, *A Sacrifice to Hypocriſie, Formality, and Vain Glory*; and therefore this counterfeit and baſe Alloy will not paſs for Purchaſe-Money; and had it what it deſerves, it would be melted down in the Furnace of Hell.

3. *All our Obedience is imperfect.*

4. *Obedience is due from us.*

4. Suppoſe it were perfect, which it is not, yet is it no more than our bounden Duty; and Duty can never be meritorious. We are bound by the Law of Nature, and, as we are Creatures who have received our Beings, and the Continuance and Preſervation of them from God, to employ our ſelves faithfully and aſſiduouſly in his Service; and if, for our greater Encouragement therein, he hath promiſed, and will beſtow upon us a vaſt and unconceivable Reward, we muſt attribute it wholly to the Supererrogation of his free Bounty; for without this, all our Services were due to him before. Thus our *Saviour* tells us, *Doth the Maſter thank the Servant becauſe he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. So likewiſe ye; when you ſhall have done all thoſe things that are commanded you, ſay,* (not in a complemental way, but with

Luk. 17. 9, 10.

with Truth and Sincerity,) *we are unprofitable Servants, we have but done that which was our Duty to do.* And therefore certainly, if we cannot deſerve Thanks, much leſs can we deſerve ſo ample a Reward as *Eternal Life:* And therefore thoſe that think to purchaſe *Heaven* and *Eternal Life* by doing that which is not commanded, nor their Duty, will find a fearful Diſappointment of their preſumptuous Hopes, when they ſhall hear that ſad Greeting, *Who hath required theſe things at your hands?*

This *Right* then of Merit and Purchaſe is excluded, and no Man can have a *Right* to Heaven upon the Account of the Worth and Value of his Works.

A threefold Right to Heaven.

There is therefore a *Threefold Right* which they *that do the Commandments of God* have to Heaven, and Eternal Happineſs.

1. 1. *They have a Right of Evidence.*
2. 2. *They have a Right of Inheritance.*
3. 3. *They have a Right of Promiſe.*

1. 1. Obedience to God's Com-

A Right of Evidence. mandments gives us a *Right of Evidence* to Eternal Life. He is judged to have the beſt Right to an Eſtate, who can produce the beſt Evidence for it. Now the beſt *Evidence* that can be ſhewn for Heaven, is our unfeigned *Obedience*: All other things that Men may rely upon to juſtifie their Title, will prove but forged Deeds, to which only the Spirit of Preſumption or Enthuſiaſm hath ſet his Seal, and not the Spirit of God; and therefore we find how miſerably the Confidence of thoſe Wretches were diſmounted, and their Hopes fruſtrated, who came

Matth. 7. 22. with *Lord, Lord, Have we not propheſied in thy Name, and in thy Name caſt out Devils, and in thy Name have done many wonderful Works?* All this

may

may be, and yet be no good Title, no good Evidence for Heaven; for if thoſe who caſt out *Devils*, have not caſt out their Luſts; if thoſe who *propheſie* in his Name, by their Sins diſhonour and blaſpheme that Name; if thoſe who are Workers of *Miracles*, are yet Workers of Iniquity, he profeſſeth againſt them, that *he knows them not*; and commands them *to depart from him for ever, as Workers of Iniquity*; whereas on the contrary, we find a joyful and bleſſed Sentence pronounced upon others, according to the Evidence brought in for them by their good Works; ſo our Lord himſelf tells us, *Come ye Bleſſed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you: for I was hungry, and ye gave me Meat; for I was thirſty, and ye gave me Drink; a Stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye cloathed me; ſick and in Priſon, and ye viſited me.* This Particle [*For*] is

Matth. 7. 22, 23.

Matth. 25. 30.

is not a Note of *Cauſality* or *Merit*, but only of *Evidence*; for as *Evidences* prove our *Right* to our Poſſeſſions, ſo likewiſe our *Obedience* and good Works do effectually prove the *Right* which we have to Eternal Life, through Chriſt's Purchaſe, and God's free Donation; and therefore the Evidence being clear, the *Sentence* muſt in Equity proceed accordingly. God, as a juſt and righteous Judge, inſtates them in the Poſſeſſion of the Kingdom of Heaven, becauſe they *viſited*, and *releived*, and *cheriſhed* his Son in his Members: Not that their Love to him, or their Charity to them purchaſed any ſuch *Right*; but only proves and evinceth it: It is not the Cauſe of their Juſtification, but a Reaſon why God declares them juſtified; as the Deeds which I produce are the Reaſon why an Eſtate is adjudged mine, though the Cauſe

of

of my *Title* to it be either my own Purchaſe, or another's Gift. As therefore thoſe are ſaid to have no *Right* nor *Title* to what they pretend, who can ſhew no Evidence for it; ſo thoſe who *obey* not the holy Will and Commands of God, have no *Right* to the *Tree of Life*, becauſe they have no Evidence to ſhew, nor no Plea to urge for it, but will certainly be caſt in their Suit.

2. Thoſe that do God's Commandments have a *Right* of *Heirſhip*, and *Inheritance* unto *Eternal Life*; for they are born of God, and therefore Heaven is their Patrimony, their Paternal Eſtate; for ſo are the Words of the Apoſtle, *Every one that doth Righteouſneſs, is born of God*: And if they are born of God, then, according to the Apoſtle's Argumentation, *If Children, then Heirs, Heirs of God, and Joint Heirs with*

2. *A Right of Heirſhip.*

1 Joh. 2. 29.

Rom. 8. 17

with Chriſt, who is the Heir of all things. The Trial of thy Legitimation, whether thou art a true and genuine Son of God, will lie upon thy *Obedience* to his Commands;

1 Joh. 3. 9, 10. *For in this,* ſays the *Apoſtle, the Children of God are manifeſt, and the Children of the Devil: Whoſoever is born of God, doth not commit Sin; and whoſoever doth not Righteouſneſs, is not of God.* Now if by our Obedience and Dutifulneſs it appears that we are indeed the Children of God, our *Father* will certainly give us a Child's Portion, and that is no leſs than a *Kingdom.* So ſaith our Sa-

Luk. 12. 32 viour, *Fear not, little Flock; it is your Father's good pleaſure to give you the Kingdom.*

3. *A Right of Promiſe.* 3. Thoſe that do God's Commandments have a *Right* to Eternal Life, by *Promiſe* and *Stipulation*; and

Tit. 1. 2. therefore it is called *Eternal Life, which God that cannot lie hath promiſed.*

Indeed,

Indeed, the whole Tenour of the Goſpel is nothing elſe but the Exhibition of this Promiſe, and a Comment upon it. This is the Summ of the Goſpel, the Terms of the Covenant, the Indenture made between God and Man; *If thou wilt enter into Life*, ſays our Saviour, *keep the Commandments.* And in another place our Lord tells us, *Not every one that ſaith unto me Lord, Lord, ſhall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doth the Will of my Father which is in Heaven.* Matth. 19. 17. Matth. 7. 21.

And thus you ſee what *Right* it is, that Obedience to the Commands of God gives us to Eternal Life: *A Right of Evidence, a Right of Heirſhip, and a Right of Promiſe.*

But, may ſome ſay, Is not this again to eſtabliſh the antiquated Covenant of Works; Do this, and live? *And doth not this aboliſh the Law of Faith*, He that believeth ſhall be ſaved? *Is it* Objection.

not

not the Office of Faith alone to convey unto us a Right and Title unto Eternal Life?

Anſwer. *I anſwer*, No, it doth no prejudice unto Faith; for we ſtill affirm, that our original and fundamental Right to Heaven is grounded, not upon our Obedience, but Chriſt's; not upon our Works, but upon his; his Merits and Purchaſe, which, through Faith, are imparted and imputed to us. Yet give me leave to ſay, that I think the Notion of Juſtifying and Saving Faith is very much, if not generally miſtaken by us: And as the Soul is the moſt noble, and moſt vital Principle of Man, and yet is moſt unknown to him what it is, and how it operates; ſo Faith, which is the vital Principle of Chriſtians, and by which the Juſt are ſaid to live, is yet moſt unknown, both as to its Nature and Operations, unto the Gene-

Generality of them: Some place it in Aſſurance, ſome in Affiance and Recumbence; ſome in one Act of Faith, and ſome in another; which are either the Effects of Faith as true, or the Degrees of it as ſtrong, rather than the proper and adequate Nature and Eſſence of it; and then they mightily puzzle themſelves how to accord and reconcile Faith and Obedience in carrying on the great Work of our Salvation, which yet were never at a variance about it, but only in their miſtaken *Hypotheſis*: For what is Faith, but an Aſſent to a Teſtimony? The very force and import of the Word can carry no other Senſe: And he that ſaith he believes, muſt needs mean he believes ſome Record or Teſtimony; or elſe he ſpeaks that which neither himſelf, nor any other can underſtand. Conſequently therefore a Divine Faith muſt be an Aſſent

ſent to a Divine Teſtimony; that is, to the Word of God contained in the Holy Scriptures. But now if this Faith reſt only in a bare and naked Aſſent to the Truth of Divine Revelation, it is but Hiſtorical and Dogmatical; which, though it be a Divine Faith in reſpect of the Objects believed, yet is it but Humane and Natural in reſpect of its Principle and Motives. But when this Aſſent to the Truths of the Scripture is joined with proportionable Affections to thoſe Truths, and doth excite us to Actions conformable to the Diſcoveries of the Divine Will, there this Faith is Juſtifying and Saving. And certainly this is not ſo very diſtant from Obedience, as to be thought hardly reconcileable with it. As for Inſtance, A Man may give a bare Aſſent to this great Goſpel-Truth, that *Jeſus Chriſt came into the World to ſave Sinners*,

Sinners, and yet this Faith may not ſave him, becauſe it may be unoperative, and paſs no farther than the Act of the Underſtanding: This is a dead Faith, which can never bring any Man to Heaven; yea, ſuch a Faith as the very *Devils* and *Damned Spirits* in Hell have, *who believe and tremble.* Another Man believes the ſame Truth, and aſſents to the ſame Propoſition; but this his Aſſent influenceth his Affections, and governs his Actions, in Conformity to the Nature and Conſequences of ſuch a Belief: And becauſe he is aſſured that Jeſus Chriſt came into the World to be the Saviour of it, therefore he loves him, truſts in him, relies upon him, hopes in his Promiſes, and obeys his Commands. And this, indeed, is a true Saving, Juſtifying Faith; for Saving Faith is a firm Aſſent unto the Truths of God revealed in the holy Jam. 2. 19

What Saving Faith is.

Scriptures, working in us proportionable Affections and Actions. He who ſo believes *the Glory of Heaven*, as to have his Endeavours thereby quickned to uſe his utmoſt Diligence for the obtaining of it: He who ſo believes *the Torments of Hell*, as thereby to be terrified from doing any thing that might expoſe him to ſo great and fearful a Condemnation: He who ſo believes *the Attributes of God*, as thereby to be excited to fear him for his Greatneſs, to love him for his Goodneſs, to imitate him in his Bounty, Purity, and Holineſs: He who ſo believes *the All-ſufficiency, Merits, and Mediatory Office of Jeſus Chriſt*, as thereby to be engaged with all his Soul to love him, to truſt in him, to rely upon him alone for Salvation, and to yield to him all ſincere Obedience, as the Law requires; ſuch an ones Faith is Saving

and

and Juſtifying. So that you ſee there is no ſuch Diſcord between Faith and Works, as ſome would imagine; for that Faith that ſaves us, *muſt work by Love*; and thoſe Works which capacitate us for Salvation, muſt be *the Obedience of Faith*, as it is called, *Rom.* 16. 26. Gal. 5. 6. Rom. 16. 26.

Now, What is the End of all this, but to preſs you to true practical Holineſs, and a ſtrict Obedience to the Commandments of God? If I ſhould go from one Perſon to another, and ask you one by one, Do you hope to be ſaved? Where is the Man that would not teſtifie the Confidence of his Hopes, by his Diſdain at the *Queſtion*? Yea, but remember that Salvation is a litigious Claim, and you have a powerful Adverſary that puts in a ſtrong Plea againſt you, even the Juſtice of God, and his Eternal Wrath and Vengeance; whoſe Title to us, *Uſe.*

were it but better weighed and conſidered, would wofully ſtagger the Hopes of moſt Men, and make their Faces gather Blackneſs, and ſmite their Hearts with Amazement, and their Knees with Trembling. In a Matter of ſuch infinite Importance, it highly concerns us to examine our *Right* and *Title*, and to peruſe and try our *Evidences*, leſt at the Day of Trial we be caſt in our Suit, and pay dreadful Damages unto the Juſtice of God.

Only thoſe who *do God's Commandments* have this *Right to the Tree of Life.* Chriſt hath indeed purcha-
Heb. 5. 19. ſed Salvation for all, but *he is the Author of Salvation only to thoſe who obey him*, as the Author to the *Hebrews*
Heb. 2. 14. ſpeaks: And, *Without Holineſs no Man ſhall ever ſee the Lord.* The Inheritance is indeed purchaſed, but where are your Evidences of your *Heirſhip*? Sirs, flatter not your ſelves with any

vain

vain Conceits of the Mercy of the Goſpel, in prejudice to the Authority of the Law: The Commandments are the Statute-Law of God's Kingdom, the Goſpel is his Court of Chancery; but neither Juſtice nor Equity will relieve thoſe who have not done their utmoſt to obſerve his Statute-Law; and therefore thoſe who indulge themſelves in their Sloth, and wilful Neglect, both of what they ought, and might have done, do but deceive their Souls with vain Hopes; they have no *Right* to the *Eternal Inheritance*, but their Portion muſt for ever be, with *Dogs and Swine*, without the *holy City*, into which no unclean thing ſhall ever enter. And if any think this Legal Preaching, let mine ever be ſo.

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

A SERMON PREACHED ON EASTER-DAY, FROM ACTS II. XXIV.

BY

EZEKIEL HOPKINS,

Late Lord Bishop of *London-Derry*.

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THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST, &c.

ACT. 2. 24.

Whom God hath raiſed up, having looſed the Pains of Death, becauſe it was not poſſible that he ſhould be holden of it.

CHriſtian Religion is founded upon ſuch myſterious and ſupernatural Truths, and the Principles of it are ſo paradoxal to the received Opinions of Mankind, that the greateſt Perſecution it ever found in the World, was not ſo much from Fire and Sword, Racks and *Introduction.*

and Tortures, the evident Cruelties of the firſt Oppoſers of it, as from the Magiſterial Dictates of partial and corrupt Reaſon.

The *Philoſophers*, whom *Tertullian* calls the *Patrons of Hereticks*, have eſtabliſhed two peremptory *Maxims*, utterly repugnant unto what the *Scripture* reveals to us, both concerning our Happineſs & Comfort: The one is, *Ex nihilo, nihil habetur*: *Out of nothing, nothing can be made*; directly levell'd againſt the Creation of the World. And the other is, *A privatione ad habitum non datur Regreſſus*: *There is no Reſtoration of the ſame Being, after a total Corruption and Diſſolution of it*; which ſtill continues a great Prejudice againſt the Reſurrection of our Bodies; which the *Oracles* of *Reaſon* have ſo much troubled the World with, that whatſoever ſeem'd in the leaſt contradictory to it, they judged contradictory

ſtory to common Senſe, and exploded it as ridiculous and impoſſible. Under theſe great Diſadvantages the *Chriſtian Religion* labour'd, whilſt it not only own'd the Creation of the World out of nothing, formerly deſcribed by *Moſes*; but more clearly and openly atteſted the Reſurrection of the Dead, which before was not either ſo clearly known, or ſo clearly proved; for theſe Doctrines were held ſo abſurd by the great *Sophiſters* of the World, whoſe Minds were too deeply tinctur'd with contrary Notions, that they look'd upon the *Chriſtian Religion* as a Deſign rather to deſtroy *Reaſon*, than to ſave the Soul; accounting it a very abſurd thing to believe in a crucified Saviour, as being a Perſon weak and impotent; or the future Reſurrection, as being a thing utterly impoſſible.

We

We find the *Apoſtle* to the *Corin-*
1 Cor. 1. 24. *thians*, complaining that the *Greeks*, who were then the great Maſters of Wiſdom and Learning, eſteemed a crucified Chriſt Fooliſhneſs, and thought thoſe Men little befriended by *Reaſon*, that would depend for Life upon one that loſt his own; and venture to take off the Shameſulneſs of the *Croſs*, or to ſilence thoſe Scoffs that were caſt upon them for their Credulity, who affirm the wonderful *Reſurrection* of a dead Saviour, and his glorious Triumph over *Death* and the *Grave*. For this ſeemed to them no other than to ſolve an Abſurdity by an Impoſſibility, and make Reaſon more ſuſpicious, in that they judged the Fundamentals of *Reaſon* muſt be overthrown, to make the Fundamentals of *Chriſtianity* any way tolerable or poſſible. Wherefore we find that even at *Athens*, that great Concourſe of Wits,

Wits, where all the *Sect* of *Philoſophers* made their common Retreat; yet when St. *Paul* preached to them *Jeſus*, and the *Reſurrection*, this Doctrine ſeem'd ſo abſurd and fooliſh to them, and ſo contrary to all Principles of right *Reaſon*, that they forgot that Civility that uſually is found in Men of inquiſitive Spirits, and brake out into open Reproaches and Revilings; *What will this Babler ſay? becauſe he preached to them Jeſus, and the Reſurrection.* No doubt they wanted not very ſpecious Arguments to urge againſt the *Reſurrection* of the Body: As firſt, The Impoſſibility of a Recollection of the diſperſed Particles of Men, reſolved into their Elements, and ſcatter'd by the four Winds of Heaven; though it might be very well retorted on the *Epicureans*, who diſputed with St. *Paul*, againſt the *Reſurrection*, that it was not ſo unlikely a thing, Act. 17. 18

a thing that there might be a Re-union of the ſcatter'd Parts of the ſame Man, as the fortuitous Concourſe of *Attoms* at the firſt Making of the World; yet this *Objection* overbore and prevaild with *Heathens*, that when they burnt the Bodies of *Chriſtians*, they caſt their Aſhes into the Rivers, to confute their Hopes of ever being raiſed again; from whence they ſhould be carried away into an unknown *Ocean*, and there be made the Sport of Winds and Waves. But what our *Saviour* ſays upon the ſame Occaſion to the *Sadduces*, may be ſaid unto theſe Men;

Matth. 22. 29. *You err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the Power of God*: For unleſs their Parts could be ſcatter'd beyond the reach of *Omnipotency*, unleſs they could be ground ſo ſmall, as to ſcape the *Knowledge* and *Care* of God, who ordereth and rangeth every Mote that plays up and down in the

the *Sun-beams*, this Diſperſion of the Body proves not the Impoſſibility of their Union, becauſe the *Power* and *Providence* of God will gather up every Duſt, and rally them together again, into the ſame Place and Order as now they are.

Another Argument againſt the *Reſurrection of the Body*, may be the various Changes dead Bodies undergo; being firſt turn'd into Earth, that again turn'd into Graſs and Herbs, that becoming Nouriſhment for other Men or Beaſts, that Nouriſhment again paſſing into their Subſtance, making a kind of *Tranſmigration* of *Bodies*, as *Pythagoras* would have there was of Souls: which is very evident in the Caſe of *Anthropomorphites*, and *Men-Eaters*, who have, of ſeveral parts of other Men's Bodies, compounded their own. And ſo the ſame *Queſtion* may be demanded, which the *Sad-*

Objection.

duces

duces asked our *Saviour*, concerning the ſeven Brethren that married the ſame Woman, *whoſe Wife of the ſeven ſhe ſhould be at the Reſurrection?* So here, thoſe Parts that belonged to ſo many Men, to which of them belong they in the *Reſurrection*, without detriment to the reſt? Here the ſame Anſwer occurrs, that Chriſt gave them; *You err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the Power of God*; who is the beſt Judge of Property, and can reſolve all thoſe Parts, by which any Nouriſhment hath been received by any other Creatures, unto their own proper *Bodies* again.

Matth. 22. 29.

And thus it appears, theſe *Arguments* againſt the *Reſurrection* of the Body, amount not to prove the Impoſſibility of the Effect; but only the Supernatural Almighty Power of the Efficient. Wherefore, granting the *Reſurrection* impoſſible, according to the Original Courſe of Natural

Natural Things, yet when an Omnipotent Arm doth interpoſe, which gives Laws unto it, who dares to ſay, the Creature may be brought to ſuch a State of Diſſolution, as may out-reach the Dominion of the Almighty Creator.

Upon theſe Grounds it is, that the *Apoſtle* urgeth, *why it ſhould be thought a ſtrange and incredible thing that God ſhould raiſe the Dead*; and in the *Text*, that he aſſerts the *Reſurrection* of *Chriſt*. And to prevent any fallacious Cavils againſt it, he ſhews, Act. 26. 8.

Firſt, That *God raiſed him from the Dead*; and therefore it was not to be accounted a thing impoſſible, ſince to God nothing could imply a Contradiction. I. *Diviſion of the Words.*

Secondly, He doth not only aſſert the Poſſibility, but the Impoſſibility of his final Continuance under the Power of Death. The Grave II.

that graſps and retains all other Mortals, was not able to detain him who hath Immortality and Life dwelling in himſelf: *It was not poſſible he ſhould be holden of it*, therefore God hath raiſed him up, *looſing the Pains of Death. Whom God raiſed up*: Here is the Efficient Cauſe of *Chriſt's Reſurrection*, in the concurrent Action of the whole *Trinity*; for all that God doth out of himſelf, is aſcribed to all the Three Perſons. Sometimes it is aſcribed to the *Fa-*
Act. 3. 13, 15. *ther*, as the *Apoſtle* ſpeaks; *The God of* Abraham, *and of* Iſaac, *and of* Jacob, *the God of our Fathers, hath glorified his Son* Jeſus, *whom ye delivered up, and denied the Holy One, and the Juſt, deſiring a Murtherer; and killed the Prince of Life, whom God hath raiſed from the Dead.* Sometimes it is aſcribed to the *Son*, who by the infinite Power of his Divinity, raiſed up his Humane Nature from the Grave:

Grave: So our Saviour himſelf tells us, *I lay down my Life of my ſelf: I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again.* The ſame may be collected of the *Holy Ghoſt*, from the Words of the Apoſtle; *If the Spirit of him that raiſed up Jeſus from the Dead dwell in you, he that raiſed up Chriſt from the Dead, ſhall alſo quicken your mortal Bodies by his Spirit.* Now if the Spirit of God can quicken our Bodies, the ſame Spirit alſo can quicken the Body of Chriſt, ſince it is the ſame Spirit that quickens both the Head, and the Members.

Joh. 3. 18.

Rom. 8. 11.

Having looſed the Pains of Death: In ſome Copies it is, *Having looſed the Pains of Hell*; which poſſibly gave Occaſion to that fond Opinion of ſome, that Chriſt deſcended into Hell, and there underwent the Pains and Penalties of that infernal Place, as full Satisfaction to the Juſtice of God; and that theſe were

the Pains God raiſed or looſed him from in his *Reſurrection.* But this Conceit is erroneous and extravagant, and deſerves no ſerious Confutation, eſpecially becauſe it plainly contradicts Chriſt's *Conſummatum eſt* upon the Croſs; for when Chriſt had undergone his Sufferings on the Croſs, he ſaid, *It is finiſhed, and ſo gave up the Ghoſt.* If Chriſt therefore did undergo any farther Sufferings and Pains than thoſe Sufferings he underwent on the Croſs, thoſe Sufferings would have been ſo far from being compleated and finiſhed, that they would have been but the *Præludium*, and Beginning of his Sorrows. *Having looſed the Pains of Death*, it implies no more but that God raiſed Jeſus Chriſt from Death, which, after many dolorous Pains, he ſuffered. It follows, *It was not poſſible he ſhould be holden of it.* This is that I intend

Joh 18. 30.

prin-

principally to inſiſt upon; and here I ſhall ſhew upon what Accounts it was altogether impoſſible for Chriſt to be detained under the Power of *Death*; and my *Arguments* for the Proof hereof are theſe that follow.

Reaſons why Chriſt could not be held under the Power of Death.

I.

Becauſe of the Hypoſtatical Union.

Firſt, It was impoſſible Chriſt ſhould be held under the Power of Death, becauſe of that great and ineffable Myſtery of the Hypoſtatical Union of the Divine and Humane Nature in the Perſon of Chriſt. There are three *Unions*, the Belief of which are the Foundation of the greateſt part of the *Chriſtian Religion*, which are wholly beyond the reach of Reaſon: The *Myſtical Union* of a Believer unto Chriſt: The *Union*, or rather *Unity* of the three Glorious Perſons, *the Father*, *the Son*, and *the Holy Ghoſt*, in one Nature; and this *Hypoſtatical Union* of two Natures in one Perſon, in the Mediator. It is a Myſtery *Angels* pry into.

and adore, with Wonder and Aſtoniſhment, how the Eternal, only begotten Son of God ſhould aſſume Fleſh to himſelf, in ſo cloſe and intimate a Conjunction, that though he be Eternal, yet he ſhould be born; though he be Immortal, yet he ſhould truly die; and though he were truly dead, yet he ſhould raiſe himſelf to Life again. Theſe are things that ſeem very inconſiſtent one with another, yet they truly come to paſs through this miraculous Union, which tranſcends the Reach of *Reaſon*, as far as theſe things do that of Nature. That the ſame Perſon that is Eternal, ſhould be young; yea, be born in the Fulneſs of Time. That the ſame Perſon that hath Immortality and Life dwelling in himſelf, ſhould alſo die a ſhameful and accurſed Death. That the ſame Perſon that was truly and really dead, yet had

a power

a power to quicken and recover himſelf, *Joh.* 10. 18. And this was it which *declared him to be the Son of God with Power*, as the *Apoſtle* ſpeaks, *even by his Reſurrection from the Dead.* And indeed, if he had not riſen from the Dead, the Deity would have ſuffered in the Opinion of the World; nor would they have believed him to be the Son of God, who would ſuffer himſelf to lie under the Dominion of *Death*, longer than the End of his *Death* required it: And this I ſhall demonſtrate to you by two Arguments; only premiſing this, which is a common and true Maxim among Divines; *That when the Natural Union between Chriſt's Body and Soul was diſſolved, yet both Soul and Body did retain the Hypoſtatical Union to the Divine Nature. The Divine Nature was united to the Body of Chriſt, when the Soul was ſeparated from it.* Rom. 1. 4.

1. I. If Chriſt could not have raiſed himſelf, it muſt have been either from a Want of Power, or from a Want of Will to do it. He could not want Power to raiſe himſelf, becauſe he was God, equal in Power, and in all other Divine Attributes, with the Father. As the *Reſurrection of the Dead* is not impoſſible to the infinite Power of God, ſo neither can it be that that God who had a Will to aſſume our Fleſh, ſhould want a Will to raiſe it up: That that God who ſo lov'd the Humane Nature, as to aſſociate it into Oneneſs of Perſon with himſelf, ſhould yet ſuffer it to continue under the power of *Death*, which is, of all things, moſt contrary to his natural Inclinations. We ſee Chriſt, in his Agony, prayed moſt fervently that the bitter Cup might paſs from him, inſomuch that he ſtrained clotted Blood through him;

him; and certainly, one Ingredient into that Cup was the Separation of Soul and Body by *Death*; which is that which even innocent Nature it ſelf abhorred, as deſtructive to him; yet having taken our Nature upon him for this very End, that *by Death he might deſtroy him that had the power of Death, that is, the Devil*, he voluntarily ſubmitted himſelf to undergo it; and this End being fully accompliſh'd by his *Death*, and the Truth of his *Death* likewiſe atteſted by his lying three Days in the Earth, it was altogether impoſſible that that Perſon who had an Abhorrence of Death, and a Power to raiſe himſelf, ſhould continue longer under the Arreſt and Dominion of it. And this is the *firſt* Demonſtration of the Neceſſity of the Reſurrection of Chriſt, upon the Account of both Natures in one Perſon: As Man, ſo he abhorred Heb. 2. 14.

the

the Separation of Soul and Body; as God, ſo he was able to re-unite them: So that having, as Man, a Deſire to live, and as God, a Power to live, it was impoſſible for him to be holden of *Death*.

2. II. Becauſe of the Union of the Divine and Humane Nature in the Perſon of Chriſt, it was impoſſible that his Fleſh ſhould ſee Corruption; which yet it muſt certainly have done, had he not been raiſed in a ſhort ſpace after his Death. For ſince Chriſt's Body was not a phantaſtical Body, as ſome of old held, but made of true Fleſh, and of the ſame Temper and Conſtitution with ours, it muſt, without a *Miracle*, have undergone ſuch Changes after *Death* as ours ſhall do; and to imagine the contrary, is but to feign one *Miracle*, to avoid the neceſſity of another, even of the *Reſurrection*. But now, it was utterly

terly impoſſible that that Body that was united to both Natures, by ſo cloſe and unconceivable a Bond, ſhould ever ſee Corruption; that is, a Putrefaction in the Grave: This the *Scripture* clearly aſſerts to us; *Thou wilt not leave my Soul in Hell, neither wilt thou ſuffer thine Holy One to ſee Corruption.* Act. 2. 28. And alſo, becauſe all Bodies that are corrupted turn into ſome other Thing, and ſome other Nature, according to that undoubted Maxim of the *Philoſophers*, *Corruptio unius eſt Generatio alterius*: And ſo this horrid and blaſphemous Conſequence would follow, that the Divine Nature of the Son of God might have been joyned to ſome other. So that it was neceſſary that Chriſt ſhould be raiſed again, before any Corruption or Putrefaction, by ordinary Courſe of Nature, ſiezed upon him.

Thus

Thus I have proved by theſe *two Arguments*, that becauſe of the *Hypoſtatical Union* of the Divine and Humane Nature of Chriſt in one Perſon, it was altogether impoſſible he could be holden of *Death*.

II. *Secondly*, Another *Argument* is this, It was impoſſible Chriſt ſhould be holden of *Death*, becauſe of God's Veracity, and the Truth of thoſe Predictions which were before made concerning Chriſt, in thoſe many *Types* and *Propheſies* of the *Old Teſtament*; all which God's Faithfulneſs ſtood engaged to fulfil. I ſhall only mention that famous *Prediction* which St. *Peter* here ſubjoins, as a Proof of the Subject I am now treating upon: *It was not poſſible*, ſays he, *that Chriſt ſhould be holden of Death*; for God, ſaith the *Apoſtle*, as *David* ſaith concerning him; *Thou wilt not leave my Soul in Hell, nor ſuffer thine Holy One to ſee Cor-*

Act. 2 25, 27.

Corruption. And this *Propheſie* the *Apoſtle* quotes out of the *Pſalmiſt*; which, that it did not belong to *David*, nor did he ſpeak it concerning himſelf, when he indicted that *Pſalm*, the *Apoſtle* proves, *Ver.* 29, 30. of this *Chapter*; where he proves that *David* was dead and buried, and underwent the common Lot that all other dead Bodies did, putrefying and mouldering away in the Earth; and therefore he was not that *Holy One* that ſhould never ſee Corruption, becauſe that *Prophecy* muſt belong to ſuch an one who muſt ſo taſte of *Death*; and this is clearly implied in the former Expreſſion, *Thou wilt not leave my Soul in Hell*, that is, in the State of the Dead, for ſo is Hell to be underſtood there, as I ſhall ſhew more at large: Neither could it belong to any of thoſe who, before Chriſt, were raiſed miraculouſly from

Pſal. 16. 10.

Act. 2. 29, 30.

from the Dead, and brought back out of the State of *Death*; yet was it not in ſuch a manner, that they were not to return again to it: So that if they did not in the firſt, yet in their ſecond Dying they ſaw Corruption. This then could belong to none of them, and therefore muſt of neceſſity belong to Chriſt. And ſince the *Apoſtle* lays ſo much ſtreſs on this Argument, give me leave a little to conſider the meaning of it, and how it is applicable to him. And here I ſhall not trouble you with the various *Opinions* of thoſe that have attempted to interpret theſe Words, *Thou wilt not leave my Soul in Hell*; that by this *Hell*, into which Chriſt deſcended, is meant the place of the Damned, where he preached the *Goſpel* to them, freeing thoſe that would beleive from their Pains. Others think that this Hell, into which

which Chriſt deſcended, was one great Partition of it, called *Lymbus Patrum*, the Repoſitory of the Souls of thoſe *Fathers* who died in Obedience to God, and in Faith to the *Meſſias*, before Chriſt came in the Fleſh: And the Reaſon of his Deſcent thither was, that he might releaſe thoſe Souls from Chains, and carry them with him to Heaven; ſo that ever ſince, that *Manſion* in *Hell* hath been left void, without any Inhabitants. But this *Opinion* is not capable of any ſufficient Proof; I ſhall therefore give you that Interpretation and Judgment which carries with it the ſtrongeſt Current, both of *Scripture* and *Reaſon*. The Word *Hades*, that we *tranſlate Hell*, is very often, by the *Septuagint*, in the *Old Teſtament*, uſed to ſignifie the *Grave*, or the State of the Dead. So in *Gen.* 44. *Iſhades*, we *tranſlate* it the *Grave*; Gen 44 31

Grave, but it is the ſame Word that is uſed for *Hell* in the *Text*. And thus the Word is uſed in other places of *Scripture*, as alſo in other *Authors*, to ſignifie the Place and State of the *Dead*, and of ſeparate Souls. And for the leaving the Soul of Chriſt in *Hades*, or in *Hell*, we muſt know, that it is a thing that is not unuſual in *Scripture*, to call a Man that is *dead* by the Name of *Soul*: So the *Septuagint* tranſlate that place in *Leviticus*, *They ſhall not be defiled with dead Souls*, meaning dead Carcaſes, *neither ſhall they go into any dead Souls*, the Word is dead Bodies. But not to detain you any longer on this Speculation, though of great uſe for the right underſtanding of this excellent place of *Scripture*: If we take *Hell* for the *Grave*, we muſt take the *Soul* for the *Body*; *Thou wilt not leave my Body*

Levit. 21. 11.

in

in the Grave: But if by *Hell* be here underſtood the State of *Death*, that is, the State of Separation of *Soul* and *Body*, the Interpretation will be more eaſie and natural, *Thou wilt not leave my Soul* in a State of Separation from the *Body*, but wilt certainly unite them together again, and raiſe me up before I ſhall feel Corruption. Thus I have given you the Interpretation of the *Prophecy* of *David*, which, upon the Account of God's Truth and Veracity, was to take effect in the *Reſurrection* of our Saviour; and therefore being foretold *he ſhould not ſee Corruption*, the Faithfulneſs of God was obliged within that time inviolably to raiſe him up. And that is the ſecond *Reaſon* why it was impoſſible Chriſt ſhould be holden of *Death*, becauſe it was foretold of him, *that*

his Soul ſhould not reſt in Hell; that is, either his Body in the Grave, or his Soul in a State of Separation from his Body.

III. *Thirdly*, Another *Argument* is this: *It was impoſſible Chriſt could be holden by Death, upon the Account of God's Juſtice.* For Juſtice, as it doth oblige to inflict Puniſhment upon the Guilty, ſo alſo to abſolve and acquit the Innocent. Now, though Chriſt *knew no Sin*, yet was he *made Sin for us*; that is, our Sins were imputed to, and charged upon him, and ſo, through a voluntary Suſception and Undertaking of them, he became guilty of them: Hereupon Divine Juſtice ſeized upon him, as being our Surety, and demanded Satisfaction from him for our Offences: Now no other Satisfaction would be acceptable

God's Juſtice would not ſuffer Chriſt to lie in the Grave.

ceptable unto God, nor commenſurate to our Sins, but the bearing of an infinite Load of Wrath and Vengeance; which if it had been laid upon us, muſt have been prolonged to an Eternity of Sufferings; for becauſe we are finite Creatures, we cannot bear infinite Degrees of Wrath at once, and therefore we muſt have lain under thoſe infinite Degrees of Wrath to an infinite Duration: But now Chriſt being God, he could bear the Load of infinite Degrees of Wrath at once upon him. In that one bitter Draught, the whole Cup of that Fury and Wrath of God, that we ſhould have been everlaſtingly a drinking off, by little Drops, Chriſt drank off at once. Now it is the *Nature* and *Conſtitution* of all *Laws*, that when a Perſon by undergoing the Penalty that

thoſe Laws require, hath made ſatisfaction for the Offence committed, the Perſon ſatisfying ought to be protected as innocent. It could not therefore conſiſt with the *Juſtice of God*, that when Chriſt had ſatisfied his utmoſt Demands, that any of the puniſhment due to our Sins, for which he ſatisfied, ſhould have lain upon him longer; for that would have been no other than puniſhing without an Offence. Now nothing is clearer in *Scripture*, than that *Death* is a puniſhment inflicted upon us for
Rom 6 23. Sin: So ſays the Apoſtle; *The Wages of Sin is Death.* And in ano-
and 5. 12. ther place, *By Sin Death entred into the World, and Death paſſed upon all, becauſe all have ſinned.* From all which it follows, that as Chriſt taking upon him our Sins, became thereby liable to *Death*; ſo having

ſatisfied

ſatisfied for our Sins, and thereby freed himſelf from the Guilt that he lay under by Imputation, he was no longer liable unto *Death*, which is one part of the puniſhment he underwent; ſo that it could not have been agreeable to infinite Juſtice, that Chriſt ſhould have been holden of *Death*, who by his undergoing of *Death*, hath ſuſtained the whole Load of God's infinite Wrath and Diſpleaſure, and fully ſatisfied for all thoſe Sins that were imputed to him, and therefore ought in Juſtice to be acquitted from all Penalties, and conſequentially from Death.

Fourthly, *It was impoſsible Chriſt ſhould be holden of Death*, in reſpect of his *Office* of *Mediatorſhip*: For having as our Mediatour undertaken the deſperate Service of bring- IV. *Chriſt could not be holden of Death, becauſe of his Mediatorſhip.*

ing ſinfull and fallen Man to Life and Happineſs, he muſt of neceſſity not only *dye*, but *riſe again* from the *dead*, without which his Death, and whatever elſe he did or ſuffered for us, would have been of no avail. There are two Things requiſite, before any real or eternal Benefit can become ours.

Firſt, A meritorious purchaſe, procuring the Thing it ſelf for us.

Secondly, An effectual Application of that Benefit to us. The Purchaſe of Mercy was made by the *Death of Chriſt*, by which a full Price was paid down to the Juſtice of God. But the effectual Application of Mercy is by the *Life* and *Reſurrection* of *Chriſt*. Wherefore if Chriſt had only dyed, and not riſen again; if he had not overcome

come *Death* within its own *Empire*, and triumph'd over the *Grave* in its own *Territories*, it would have been to his Diſappointment, and not at all to our Salvation. The Loſs of Chriſt's Life would not have procured Life for us, unleſs as he laid it down with Freedom; ſo he had again reſtored it with Power. Our hope of Salvation otherwiſe would have been buried in the ſame Grave with himſelf; but what he died to procure, he lives to confer. It was Ignorance of *Chriſt's Reſurrection from the Dead*, that ſo ſtagger'd the two *Diſciples* going to *Emaus*: They tell Chriſt himſelf a ſad Story of one *Jeſus of Nazareth*, that was condemned and crucified, who, while he lived among us, by his Word and Works teſtified himſelf to be the true *Meſſiah*, we little thought of his Dy- Luk. 24. 16, 19, 20, 21.

ing; and when he told us of his *Death*, he likewiſe foretold us of his *Reſurrection the third Day*; and behold, the *third Day* is already come, and yet is there no Appearance of this Jeſus: *Verily, we truſted that it had been he which ſhould have redeemed* Iſrael; but now our Hopes grow faint, and languiſh in us; for certainly, there can be no *Redemption* for *Iſrael* by him who cannot redeem himſelf from Death. There was nothing in the World did ſo much prejudice the *Goſpel*, and hinder its taking place in the Hearts of *Heathens* in the *Primitive Times*, as this of the Croſs and Death of Chriſt; for believing that he was lifted up upon the *Croſs*, but not believing that he was raiſed up from the *Dead*, they aſſented to their *Natural Reaſon*, which herein taught them, that it was Folly to expect

pect Life from him who could not either preſerve or reſtore his own.

It is true, it was Folly thus to hope, but that his Life applies what his Death deſerv'd; and our Salvation begun on the Croſs, is perfected on the Throne. And therefore the *Apoſtle* tells us, our Faith in a crucified Saviour, and our Obedience to him is all vain, if he had not riſen again from the Dead: For unleſs he had riſen from the Dead, he could not have acquitted us from the Guilt of Sin, becauſe he could not have been juſtified himſelf. We are juſtified by the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt, as the *Apoſtle* ſpeaks, in his Epiſtle to the *Romans*; which Righteouſneſs he wrought out for us, both by his perfect Obedience to the Law, and by his Submiſſion to the Puniſh-

1 Cor. 15. 17.

Rom 4 25

ment

ment of the Law: But yet this Righteouſneſs could not have availed to our Juſtification, had he not, after the Fulfilling of it, riſen again from the Dead; becauſe he himſelf had not been juſtified, much leſs could we have been juſtified by one who could not have juſtified himſelf. And therefore we read, *Great is the Myſtery of Godlineſs*, ſays the *Apoſtle*; *God manifeſted in the Fleſh*, in his Incarnation; *juſtified in the Spirit*, by his Reſurrection; *ſeen of Angels*, in his Aſcenſion. Had he not been raiſed and quickned by the Spirit, that is, by the glorious Power of his Divine Nature, he had not been declared juſt, nor could he have juſtified us: For this Declaration, that Chriſt was juſt, was made upon the Reſurrection of his Body from the Dead, by which he

1 Tim. 3. 16.

was

was ſet free from all thoſe Penalties due to our Sins that were imputed to him. If therefore the Juſtification and Salvation of Sinners was a Deſign laid by the infinite Wiſdom of God, it muſt needs follow, that it was impoſſible for Chriſt to be kept under Death, becauſe that would have obſtructed their Juſtification and Salvation, and ſo would have brought a Diſappointment upon the infinite Wiſdom of God, which was impoſſible to be done; and therefore conſequentially Chriſt could not be holden of Death.

The Application of this great Truth ſhall be briefly in theſe following Inferences.

Firſt then, If it was impoſſible for Chriſt not to have riſen from the *Uſe* I.

the Dead, it is evident then that Chriſt is the true *Meſſiah*: For had he been an Impoſtor, or *Falſe Prophet*, it would have been ſo far from an Impoſſibility that he ſhould not have been raiſed, that it would have been a very Impoſſibility for him to have riſen again; for neither could he have raiſed himſelf, being a mere Man; neither would God have raiſed him, being a mere *Impoſtor* and *Cheat*. When therefore the *Jews* call'd for a *Sign* from Chriſt, to prove him to be the true *Meſſiah*, he gives them the Sign of his Reſurrection, in *Matth.* 12. 38, 39. *Maſter, ſay they, we would ſee a Sign from thee. He anſwered and ſaid unto them, An evil and adulterous Generation ſeeketh after a Sign, and there ſhall be no Sign given to it, but the Sign of the Prophet* Jonas: *For as* Jonas *was three Days and three Nights*

Matth. 12 38, 39.

in

in the Whale's Belly, ſo ſhall the Son of Man be three Days and three Nights in the Heart of the Earth. So again, when they tempted him at another time, for a *Sign* of his being the *Meſſiah*, he ſtill inſtances in his powerful Reſurrection from the Dead, in *Joh.* 2. 18, 19. *The Jews anſwered and ſaid unto him, What Sign ſheweſt thou unto us, ſeeing thou doeſt theſe things. Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, Deſtroy this Temple, and in three Days I will raiſe it up* So that ſtill he made his *Death* and *Reſurrection* to be the infallible Proof of his being the true *Meſſiah*. Joh. 2. 18, 19.

Secondly, If it were neceſſary that Chriſt ſhould riſe from the Dead, and that he did do ſo, then certainly Sin is conquered; for the Sting of Death, and that envenom'd Weapon Death hath, whereby *Uſe* II.

whereby it wounds, yea kills the Sinner, is Sin; and as long as Death hath this Sting in it, it could not have been conquer'd by any Sinner. It is Sin that gives Death its Power to hold faſt all thoſe that come within its reach; which ſince it could not do with Chriſt, it is evident Sin is ſubdued by Chriſt, who was in its Arms and Graſp, but yet came ſafe out from it, taking away the Sting and Weapon of Death with him.

Uſe III. *Thirdly*, If the *Reſurrection* of *Chriſt* be thus neceſſary, and hath been thus effectually accompliſhed, we may comfortably from thence conclude the Neceſſity of our own *Reſurrection*; for the Head being raiſed, the Members ſhall not always ſleep in the Duſt. Chriſt's *Myſtical* Body ſhall certainly be raiſed,

raiſed, as well as his *Natural* Body; and every Member of it ſhall be made for ever glorious, with a glorious and triumphant Head.

FINIS.

Brotherly Admonition.

IN SEVERAL

SERMONS

ON

Leviticus 19. 17.

By EZEKIEL HOPKINS,

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Brotherly Admonition

IN SEVERAL

SERMONS.

LEV. 19. 17.

Thou ſhalt not hate thy Brother in thy Heart: thou ſhalt in any wiſe rebuke thy Neighbour, and not ſuffer Sin upon him.

WAving all Prefaces and Introductions, we may obſerve in theſe Words three Parts. *Diviſion of the Words.*

Firſt, A Negative Command, *Thou ſhalt not hate thy Brother in*

thy Heart: which implies in it the contrary poſitive Precept, thou ſhalt love thy Brother.

2. *Secondly*, A Direction how we ſhould preſerve our ſelves from this rancoured Vice of Hatred, and expreſs our more cordial Love, in the beſt Service we can do for him; *Thou ſhalt in any wiſe rebuke thy Neighbour.*

3. *Thirdly*, A forcible Motive to excite us unto the performance of this Duty, drawn from the Conſideration of the great Benefit which will in likelyhood redound to him by the conſcientious diſcharge of it. By this means thou wilt not *ſuffer Sin to lie upon him*: implying, that if this charitable Duty of *Fraternal Reproof* be neglected, he will ſtill continue in his Sins, his Guilt will remain upon him, and thou wilt be acceſſory to it.

I ſhall not conſider any of theſe Particulars by themſelves, but treat only of what is here chiefly intended, namely, the neceſſity of that much neglected Duty of *Brotherly Reproof and Admonition.*

And here I ſhall proſecute this Method with all poſſible Brevity and Perſpicuity.

Firſt, Shew you what *Brotherly Correption* is. 1.

Secondly, The Difficulty of it. 2.

Thirdly, The Neceſſity of it. 3.

Fourthly, Lay down ſome Rules and Directions how it ought to be performed. 4.

Fifthly, Lay before you ſome Conſiderations that may be powerful Motives and Engagements to it. 5.

Firſt, What *Brotherly Reproof or Correption is.* 1.

What Brotherly Reproof is.

To this I anſwer in brief, It is an Act of Love and Charity, whereby we endeavor to reduce our offending Brother to Repentance and Reformation: And there are two ways of doing it, either by *Words* or *Actions*.

1. *Reproof is by Words.*

Firſt, By *Words*; remonſtrating to them the greatneſs of their Sin, the Scandal they give to others, either by encouraging, or ſadning them; the Reproach they bring upon Religion, and the Danger they bring upon their own Souls. But if they be deaf to all theſe *Admonitions*, and continue obſtinate and reſolv'd in their evil Courſes, we are then to reprove them.

2. *Reproof may be by Actions.*

Secondly, By *Actions*; That where Words have proved ineffectual, we may try how Deeds can prevail. Prevail, I ſay, either to deliver them, or,

at

at leaſt, to deliver thine own Soul from Death. And this alſo muſt be done theſe two ways.

Firſt, If they be our Inferiours over whom we have Authority, either as *Magiſtrates*, or *Parents*, or the like; we ought, when *Admonition* and *Correption* is fruitleſs, to reprove them by *Correction* and *Puniſhment*: If they will not hear, they muſt feel Rebuke. This *Diſcipline* if it be ſeaſonably and prudently uſed, is ſo far from being any Act of Cruelty, that it is an Act of the greateſt Kindneſs and Charity that can be both to them and to others.

1. *Reproof of Inferiors, is to be by Authority.*

To them: As it may reſtrain them from the commiſſion of thoſe future Crimes, to which their impurity would elſe imbolden them. And thus to fall into the Hands of Men, may be

Reproof tends to reſtrain from Sin.

a means to keep them from falling into the Hands of God.

To others: As it may terrify them from following the *Examples* of ſuch an ones Vices, by ſeeing the *Examples* of his ſuffering. Thus the Puniſhment of ſome is made to be come the Innocence of others.

2. *If Equals continue obſtinate under Reproof, we muſt withdraw Society from them.*

Secondly, If they be our Equals, over whom we have no Juriſdiction, nor coercive Power, we are then to rebuke them, if they continue obſtinate after *Chriſtian Admonition*, by withdrawing our ſelves from all neceſſary Converſe with them; not ſo as to deny them the offices of Civility, Courteſy, and our charitable Aſſiſtance to promote their temporal Good; but to break off all Familiarity and Intimacy with them: not to make ſuch lewd and diſſolute

Per-

Perſons our Friends and choſen Companions. Thus the *Apoſtle* charges us, 2 *Theſſ.* 3. 6. 2 Theſſ. 3. 6. *We command you, Brethren, in the Name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that you withdraw your ſelves from every Brother that walketh diſorderly, and not after the Tradition which he received of us.* And this way of reproving them ought to be ſo managed by us, that it may appear it doth not proceed from any ſowr, moroſe, ſurly Humour, diſdaining or hating of their Perſons, but meerly from conſcience of our Duty towards the Glory of God, and to do an Act of Love and Charity, as indeed it is, both towards them, and towards our ſelves.

Firſt, Towards them: When you thus endeavour to ſhame them out of their Wickedneſs, by diſcountenancing them in it. 1.

it. So ſays the *Apoſtle*, 2 *Theſſ.* 3. 14. *If any Man obey not our Word, note that Man, and have no Company with him, that he may be aſhamed.* And indeed, if a Man be not altogether profligate, if he be not utterly loſt to Modeſty, it muſt needs make him reflect upon himſelf with Shame and Bluſhing, that certainly he is grown a ſtrange vile Wretch, a loathſom and odious Monſter, when all good and ſober Men do thus carefully ſhun and avoid him. Now Shame is a good ſtep to Amendment: And a Bluſh the firſt colour that Virtue takes.

2. *Secondly*, Towards your ſelves: You are obliged to abandon them, as to reclaim them, ſo to ſecure your ſelves: For *Vice* is very contagious, and it is unſafe to converſe with thoſe, who have

have ſuch Plague-Sores running upon them, leſt you be alſo infected.

Thus you ſee what this Duty of *Brotherly Reproof* is, and how in the general it is to be performed, either in Words or Actions. And to theſe, two Things are neceſſarily previous and antecedent,

Firſt, Inſtruction and Conviction. We ought to bring them to ſee their Fault before we rebuke them for it; otherwiſe while we chide and do not inform them, it will rather ſeem a proud deſign of quarrelling with them, than a conſcientious deſign of bettering them. And therefore we find how artificially *Nathan* inſinuates into *David* the hainouſneſs and inhumanity of his Sin, and works in him a Hatred and Deteſtation of that

1. *Conviction of the Fault,*

that Perſon who was ſo cruel and devoid of Compaſſion, before he comes to deal downright with him, *Thou art the Man.* And could we but skilfully convince our Brother, by thus repreſenting the odiouſneſs of ſuch and ſuch Sins, to which we know he is addicted, poſſibly we might ſpare our ſelves in that which is the moſt ungrateful and diſpleaſing part of this Work, I mean perſonal Reflection, and leave it to his own Conſcience to reprove himſelf, and to apply it home, with, *Thou art the Man.* And,

2. *We ought to watch over our Brother.*

Secondly, It is neceſſary that we watch over our Brother, not ſo as to be inſidious Spies upon him, officiouſly to pry into his Actions, and buſily concern our ſelves in all he doth. This pragmatical Temper is juſtly hateful:

ful: And thoſe who thus arrogate to themſelves to be publick Cenſors, and to inſpect the Lives and Manners of others, making it their whole Imployment to obſerve what others ſay or do, that they may have Matter either to reprove or reproach them, are a Company of intolerable buſy Bodies. But yet,

Firſt, We ought ſo to watch over our Brother as to give him timely Caution if we ſee him in any danger through Temptation or Paſſion, and to admoniſh him to ſtand upon his guard, to recollect himſelf and beware he be not ſurprized or injured by ſuch an approaching Sin. 1. *By Caution.*

And *Secondly*, If we have obſerved any Miſcarriages in him, we are to watch the beſt Seaſons, and all the fitteſt Circumſtances in which to remind him 2. *The beſt ſeaſon.*

of

of it, that ſo our Reproof may be well accepted, and become effectual. For he that will venture raſhly to reprove without this Circumſpection, may do more miſchief to his Brother by rebuking him, than he had done to himſelf by offending: Exaſperating and imbittering his Heart againſt Piety, for the Impertinencies, at leaſt the Indiſcretions of thoſe who profeſs it, and provoking him to ſin the more out of meer Oppoſition and Contradiction. And I am verily perſwaded, and have in ſome Caſes obſerved it, that very many Sins owe themſelves to the imprudence of thoſe who have taken upon themſelves to be Reprovers, and would never have been committed, if they had not indiſcreetly gainſay'd it. Thus we ſee what this Duty

of

of reproving is, and what is neceſſarily required thereunto.

2. *Of the difficulty of Reproof.*

But indeed, which is the Second Thing, It is not ſo hard a Matter to know what it is, as it is difficult conſcientiouſly and faithfully to practiſe it. How few are there in the World, I will not ſay skillful enough to do it well, but zealous and conſcientious enough to do it at all? Do we not every day ſee God fearfully diſhonoured, obſerve his Name blaſphemed, his Laws violated, his Worſhip denied? Do you not daily ſee multitudes of wretched Creatures, whoſe Crimes not only defie and outrage God, but ſtab and murther their own Souls; and yet who is there that hath that Zeal for God, or that Charity for his Brother, as to interpoſe, and by a ſerious and fitting Reproof, vin-

vindicate the one from Diſhonour, or reſcue the other from Perdition? There are enow that will make up a ſad Mouth, and whiſper thoſe things abroad, it may be out of very ill Ends and Deſigns: but where almoſt is the Perſon that will dare to maintain the Honour of God to the Face of thoſe who boldly affront him; that will dare to open their Mouths before thoſe that will dare to open them againſt Heaven? Certainly we can eaſily produce much more Reaſon for our Reproofs, than they can for their Wickedneſs; and it were very ſtrange, if we ſhould not be able to beat them off from their Confidence, when we have God and our own Conſciences, nay and theirs alſo, to ſide with us. Yet ſo it is that we are generally apt to

ſneak

ſneak and ſlink away from ſo troubleſome a Task, and to let Iniquity paſs uncontroul'd, yea triumphant. We are well content to let others ſin quietly, ſo that we may live quietly without troubling our ſelves with ſo hard and difficult a Service. And that which makes it ſeem ſo difficult, is,

Firſt, A ſinful Fear; and, 1.

Secondly, A ſinful Shame, 2. that ſeizeth on the Spirits of Men, and takes off the edg of holy Courage and Confidence, that are ſo abſolutely neceſſary to the performing of this Duty.

Firſt, Many are afraid to reprove Sin, leſt they ſhould incur Diſpleaſure, weaken their ſecular Intereſt, ruine their Dependencies, and bring ſome Miſchief upon themſelves, by 1. *Fear of diſpleaſing ſhould not hinder reproving for Sin.*

exaſperating the Offenders againſt them. But theſe are poor, low, carnal Conſiderations. Where Matter of Duty is in queſtion, it is very neceſſary for every Chriſtian to be of an undaunted Courage and Reſolution, not to fear the Faces of Men, nor to be frighted with a grim Look, or a proud Huff. If he will ſeriouſly perform this Duty, he muſt remember, that he is pleading for God, that he is ſaving a Soul from Hell, and therefore ought not to value their Anger, nor his own Damage; but to ſteel himſelf againſt all ſuch mean and ſordid Conſiderations. Indeed it ſhews a moſt pitiful Spirit in us, that we ſhould be more afraid of offending them, than they are of offending God. Shall they be bold to ſin, and we not bold enough

nough to tell them of it? And yet ſuch is the Cowardize of the Generality of Chriſtians, that they dare not appear for God, or for Piety and Holineſs, when they ſee them wronged by the Impudence of boiſterous Sinners; but thoſe pitiful, little, baſe carnal Reſpects of what they may loſe, or what they may ſuffer by it, intervene, and make them ſit mopiſh, and over-aw'd, *like Men in whoſe Mouths are no Reproofs*; whilſt theſe wicked Wretches, who have all the Reaſon in the World to be timorous and fearful, glory in thus outbraving and baffling them. Pſal. 38. 14.

Secondly, Others again are aſhamed to reprove Sin. And whereas many vile and profligate Wretches glory in their Shame, theſe on the contrary are aſhamed of that which

2. *Shame ſhould not hinder Reproving for Sin.*

would be their Glory. Either they doubt they ſhall be thought but troubleſome and hypocritical Intermedlers; or elſe poſſibly being conſcious to themſelves of many Miſcarriages, they ſuſpect their *Reproofs* will be upbraidingly retorted upon themſelves, and ſo by reproving the Faults of others, they ſhall but give an occaſion to have their own ript up and expoſed: And ſo they think it the ſafer way to ſay nothing, leſt by raking into other Mens Dunghills, they ſhould but furniſh them with Dirt enough to fling back in their own Faces. And thus between theſe two carnal Principles of *ſinful Fear*, and *ſinful Shame*, which are ſo deeply rooted in our corrupt Natures, *Reproof* is commonly neglected, and it is one of the hardeſt things in the World,

World, to perſwade Men to be true to God, to their own Souls, and to the Souls of their Brethren, in a faithful diſcharge of that Duty which is uſually attended with ſuch Diſadvantages and Difficulties.

But though it be thus difficult; yet,

Thirdly, It is a moſt neceſſary Duty. The greateſt good you can do in the World is to pluck up theſe Bryars and Thorns with which it is over-grown. Conſider but how inſolent Vice and Wickedneſs is apt to be where none doe appear to check and controul it. If it can but once ſilence Vertue, it will quickly baniſh it. If it can but put it to the Bluſh, it will quickly put it to flight. And when it hath once made us either afraid or aſhamed to lay a Rebuke in its

3. *Reproof a very neceſſary Duty.*

way, what elſe can we expect but that it ſhould overſpread the Face of the whole Earth, and like a general Deluge drown all Mankind, firſt in Sin, and then in Perdition. There is no other way to prevent this great and ſad Ruine, but for every Chriſtian vigorouſly to oppoſe himſelf to the growing Sins of the Times and Places in which he lives, and with Courage and Reſolution to decry that common Profaneneſs, that gains Credit only by our Silence. We know that Sin is a ſhameful opprobrious Thing in it ſelf, a Thing that diſheartens and diſpirits the Guilty; They wear a *Conſcience* about them that is ſtill checking and upbraiding them; and if we could but look into their Souls, we ſhould ſee them covered all over with Fear, Horrour, and Con-

Confuſion. They are generally ſelf-condemned Perſons, and carry thoſe Monitors within their own Breaſts that are continually reproving and tormenting them: And therefore that they may not hear the Voice of their own Conſciences, they live abroad, and rather converſe with any one without doors, than with themſelves and their own troubleſome and clamorous Hearts. Now let it be our Care to ſtop up all Paſſages, by which they think to make their eſcape. Let them find, that in whatſoever Company they go, they ſhall meet with thoſe that will no more ſpare them, than their own *Conſciences*; that Company is no Sanctuary for Sins and Guilt, and that they ſhall be as ſure to be *Reproved*, as they dare to

Offend. And when they are thus every-where beſet, their *Conſciences* exclaiming againſt them within, and all that they converſe with without, they will ſee a Neceſſity for it, either to forſake their *Vices*, or the *World*, and be forced to be vertuous for their own eaſe and quiet. And certainly till Chriſtians do conſpire together in this Deſign, we may long enough complain of the abounding of Iniquity without any ſucceſsful Reformation. Abound it will, and grow impudent and imperious, unleſs we join together to beat down its Credit, expoſe it to Scorn and Contempt, and make that which is ſo really ſhameful in it ſelf, to be the greateſt Mark of Infamy, Shame, and Reproach to any that ſhall dare to commit it.

But now this Duty of *Reproving*, requires not only a great deal of Chriſtian *Fortitude* and *Courage*, but alſo a great meaſure of Chriſtian *Prudence* and *Diſcretion*. We muſt not only be reſolute and confident in doing it, but we muſt do it likewiſe in ſuch a fitting way as may be moſt likely to work a good effect upon thoſe whom we are to *reprove*. And therefore,

In the Fourth Place, I ſhall give you ſome brief Rules and Directions, when you ought to *reprove*, and how you ought to manage your *Reproofs*, ſo as they may be moſt beneficial to your Brother. And ſome of them ſhall be *Negatives*, and others ſhall be *Poſitives*. 4. *Rules for Reproof.*

Firſt, For the *Negative* Rules, take theſe that follow. 1.

Firſt,

1. *We muſt not reprove without knowledg of the Offence.*

Firſt, I ought not to reprove my Brother, if I have no certain knowledg of his Offence. And therefore thoſe who upon a blind Rumour, or groundleſs Suſpicion, haſtily conclude him guilty, and ſo fill their Mouths with Reproofs, ſhew themſelves to be very much in love with this Office, and are a company of impertinent buſy-bodies, who ſtart their Arrow before ever they ſee the Mark. We muſt firſt be certainly informed, either upon our Perſonal Knowledg, or upon the undoubted Teſtimonies of credible Witneſſes, that he is Guilty; otherwiſe in going about to ſhew him his *Fault*, we ſhall but ſhew our own *Folly*, and Credulity, our *Reproofs* will be but *Slanders*, and our Charity in offering the Cure, will not be half ſo great, as our uncharitableneſs in believing the Diſeaſe. *Se-*

Secondly, It is not neceſſary for me to reprove, where I have reaſon to conclude that others of more Prudence and Intereſt in the Party, either have already, or elſe will more effectually perform it: For otherwiſe it will appear that we do not ſo much ſeek his *Emendation*, as to be *Oſtentatious* of our own Zeal and Forwardneſs. And beſides, too many Reprovers may, inſtead of reforming, rather irritate and provoke: Only here, beware thou doſt not retract this ingrateful Office, upon ſlight Pretences, nor think thy ſelf excuſed, becauſe others are bound to do it. But conſider ſeriouſly in thine own Conſcience, whether thou thinkeſt they will be faithful enough in performing it, or more dextrous than thou art in managing it; or that their *Re-* 2.

proof

proof will be more acceptable and more prevalent with thy Brother than thine. If not, thou art ſtill obliged to it: And if thou refuſeſt, know, that though he may die in his Sins, yet his Blood God will require at thy Hands.

3. *Sharp Reproof muſt not be for ſmall Offences.*

Thirdly, We ought not to give ſharp *Reproofs* for ſmall *Offences*. We muſt not particularly, and with Accent and Emphaſis reprove our Brother for every involuntary ſlip, every Infirmity and Weakneſs, that bewrayeth it ſelf through ſome ſudden Paſſion or Temptation, unleſs it be a Sin of Cuſtom, or that which carries with it ſome ſignal Aggravation, that renders it conſiderable, as well in the *Scandal* as in the *Guilt*. It will be ſufficient to paſs by the reſt, only with a brief Animadverſion upon them, enough to put him in mind that

that he forgot himſelf in ſuch and ſuch Paſſages: And ſo leave the farther *Reproof* to his own Conſcience, which will better do it for leſſer Sins, than poſſibly we can. To reprove ſmall Faults with great vehemence, is always as ridiculous, and, may ſometimes prove as deſtructive a piece of Officiouſneſs, as his who took up a huge Beetle, and ſtruck with all his Might, only to kill a Fly he ſaw ſticking upon his Friends Forehead. We muſt not thruſt the *Probe* deep where the Wound is but ſhallow: Nor be paſſionately concern'd at our Brother's lighter Failings; but ſo govern our ſelves, as ſtill to reſerve the more ſharp and ſevere *Reproofs* for the more foul and ſcandalous Offences. For they that will preſently upon every ſlender occaſion fly out into Exclamations,

clamations, Deteſtations, and all paſſionate Exaggerations of Rhetorick, will but laviſhly ſpend the vigour of their Zeal, and leave themſelves no Art, no Methods to expreſs their greater abhorrence for blacker Crimes.

4. *Reproof not to be given where it will exaſperate.*

Fourthly, We are not to *Reprove* thoſe whom we have reaſon to believe are ſuch deſperate Wretches, that our *Reproofs* would but exaſperate them to ſin the more for a *Reproof*. To theſe, ſuch would be no Acts of Love and Charity, but rather a Deſign to deſtroy their Souls, and to heap more and heavy loads of Wrath and Vengeance upon their Heads. Certainly if we have any ſenſe of God's Glory, any Tenderneſs and Compaſſion for our Brother's Soul, we ought to beware that we do not inrage him

the

the more, to diſhonour the one, or to wound the other, by the miſtaken Charity of our *Reproofs*. And therefore, St. *Auſtine* ſpeaks well, (*De Civitate Dei*, lib. 1. cap. 9.) *Si propter ea corripiendis male agentibus parcit, quia opportunus tempus requirit, vel Iiſdem ipſis metuit ne deteriores ex hoc efficiantur, videtur eſſe concilium Charitatis.* It is *Charity* not to reprove thoſe, who we believe will be the worſe for our *Reproofs*. Alas how many are there in the World, who when they are reproved (and that very juſtly) for their Sins, preſently fall a blaſpheming and curſing, railing at Piety, and all that profeſs it, violate the good Name of their *Reprovers*, and can hardly abſtain from offering violence to their Perſons. Now ſuch as theſe are paſt *Reproof*, when

when once they turn *Reproof* it ſelf into an Occaſion of further ſinning. The greateſt exerciſe of *Charity* to theſe, is to let them alone, and not to increaſe their Damnation, by ſtirring up the virulency and rancour of their Spirits.

Reproof is ſpiritual *Phyſick* for the Soul. Now as it is an imprudent Courſe to adminiſter ſuch *Phyſick* to the Body, as will irritate, and not expel the peccant Humours: So likewiſe it is very imprudent and unſafe, to adminiſter ſuch *Reproofs* as we know cannot cure the Offender, but will only irritate his Corruption, and render it the more turbulent, and him much worſe than he was before. And therefore ſome are themſelves to be reproved, who with an imprudent Zeal reprove others, without

out ever conſidering what Effects their *Reproofs* are likely to produce, who, as ſoon as a Sin is committed, think themſelves obliged in Conſcience, inſtantly to rebuke them for it, although not only they themſelves may be reviled, but the Name of God moſt horribly blaſphemed upon this very Occaſion. It is indeed *good to be zealouſly affected always in a good Matter.* Gal. 4. 18. But yet withal know, that as Zeal and Charity ought to be the Motive, ſo Chriſtian Prudence ought to be the Meaſure of all our *Reproofs.* And if you take not the Advice of Diſcretion, your Zeal for God's Glory may but occaſion his Diſhonour; and your Charity to the Souls of others, occaſion their ſorer Ruine and Damnation. Certainly we are not obliged to reprove where

we have reaſon to ſuſpect we ſhall rather do hurt than good. It would be but a cruel Charity, to poiſon our Brother in his *Phyſick*, and to kill him in his Cure. And therefore both *Solomon*, and a greater than *Solomon*, our *Saviour Chriſt* himſelf, have forbidden us to miſplace *Reproofs* upon thoſe who are deſperate. *Solomon* tells us, *Proverbs* 9. 7, 8. *He that reproveth a Scorner, getteth to himſelf Shame; and he that rebuketh a wicked Man, getteth unto himſelf a Blot.* And again, *Reprove not a Scorner, leſt he hate thee.* And ſays our Saviour, *Give not that which is Holy unto Dogs, neither caſt ye your Pearls before Swine, leſt they trample them under their Feet, and turn again and rent you.* Where it is very plain from the precedent Verſes, that he dehorts us from laviſh-

Prov. 9. 7.

Matth. 7. 6.

laviſhing out our *Reproofs* imprudently upon *Dogs* and *Swine*. Wicked and impure Perſons, on whom we have reaſon to think they will have no effect, but only to inrage them, and make them fly out both againſt God and us, with the more Violence and Madneſs. To *reprove* ſuch, is but to caſt up Water againſt an high Wind, that will be ſure to beat it back again into our own Faces.

And thus I have given you the *Negative Rules* in theſe four Particulars. Reprove not without a certain knowledg of the Offence. Nor where others who are likely to be more effectual, have done it already. Nor for every involuntary ſlip. Nor thoſe who are like to be the worſe for it.

Let us now proceed to lay down ſome *Poſitive Rules* and *Directions* for the right managing of our *Reproofs*. And here,

1. *Time and Place muſt be obſerved in giving Reproof.*

Firſt, If thou wouldſt reprove with ſucceſs, obſerve right Circumſtances of Time and Place: And let the one be as opportune, and the other as private as thou canſt. We ought to obſerve the *mollia tempora fandi*, the ſoft and eaſy Hours of ſpeaking. And therefore the wiſe Man tells us, *A Word ſpoken in ſeaſon, how good is it? It is like Apples of Gold in Pictures of Silver*, that is, very beautiful and pleaſing. There are ſome happy Seaſons wherein the moſt rugged Natures are acceſſible; and it is a great part of Prudence in all our Concerns, if we would have them proſperous, to watch ſuch Oppor-

Prov. 15. 23.

portunities, and to improve them.

Now uſually it is no fit ſeaſon for Reproof, *Reproof not ſeaſonable,*

Firſt, Preſently as ſoon as the Sin is committed; for then the heat is not over, nor the uproar of the Paſſions and Affections appeaſed. In all likelihood a *Reproof* as yet would but irritate. As Water falling upon a red hot Iron, doth but cauſe a great deal of Noiſe and Diſturbance: So a *Reproof* juſt upon the very Act of a Sin, doth but make the Sinner fume, eſtuate and tumultuate the more. 1. *As ſoon as the Sin is committed.*

Nor yet,

Secondly, Is a Time of Mirth and Joy fit for *Reproof*; for that will look like a piece of Envy, as if we were malicious at their Proſperity, and therefore ſtudied to caſt in ſomewhat that might 2. *Reproof unſeaſonable in a time of Mirth.*

diſturb them; and ſo they will be apt to interpret it. Nor,

3. *Reproof unſeaſonable in a time of Sorrow.*

Thirdly, Is a Time of exceeding great Sadneſs and Sorrow, a proper Seaſon for *Reproof*; for this will look like Hoſtility and Hatred, as if we deſigned utterly to overwhelm and diſpatch them.

Reproof moſt ſeaſonable when Perſons are moſt calm and ſedate.

But the fitteſt opportunity for this Duty, is when they are moſt calm and ſedate, their Paſſions huſht, and their Reaſon (with which you are to deal) again reſeated upon its Throne. When they are free from all inward Perturbations of Mind, and from all conſiderable Alterations in their outward Eſtate and Condition. Then, if ever, they will liſten to *Reproof*, and take right Meaſures of the Sin for which you *reprove* them. But if we *reprove* them when their

their Paſſions are in a Tumult, and all within in an Uproar and Combuſtion, it is no wonder at all if either they reject or revile our *Reproofs*; for we then accuſe them before very corrupt Judges, *viz.* their own Paſſions and corrupt Affections: And you may with as much Reaſon, and as good Succeſs, chide the Sea for being Tempeſtuous, when the Winds rage and are let looſe upon it. Chide a Man for being angry when he is angry, and what will you get by it, but only ſome of his foam caſt upon you? Let God himſelf expoſtulate with an impatient *Jonah*, whilſt he is in his fit of Impatience: *Doeſt thou well to be angry?* and he will tell him ſnappiſhly to his Face, *That he doth well to be angry, even to the very Death.* There is no dealing

Jonah 4. 9.

with Men while their Paſſions blind their Reaſon; This makes them as utterly incapable of taking good Counſel, as if they were brute Beaſts. Thou wert as good thruſt thy Hand into a *Waſps Neſt*, as come with *Reproofs* and *Rebukes* when the Swarm is up, to be ſure thou ſhalt only go away with many a Sting and Wound, and thou mayeſt thank thy ſelf for no better timing thy *Reproofs*.

Indeed in Caſes of great Importance and abſolute Neceſſity, we may run this Venture, and poſſibly ſucceed well in it. Thus *Joab* very ſharply reproved *David*, when he ſo immoderately mourned for *Abſalom*. And I think it is one of the roundeſt Checks that ever a dutiful *Subject* gave to his *Prince*; but if he had not taken that very time,

2 Sam. 19. 5, 6, 7.

the

the Caſe had been deſperate, and his People had all forſaken him, and therefore the neceſſity of Affairs would not permit him to expect a more ſeaſonable Addreſs. Otherwiſe generally, it is more adviſeable to wait a fitting and cool time. As God is ſaid to come down *in the cool of the Day* to reprove *Adam*. So likewiſe ſhould we come in the cool ſeaſon of a Man's Paſſions, when all is quiet and temperate within, for then is there the greateſt probability of Succeſs.

2. *Reproof muſt be with Gentleneſs and Meekneſs.*

Secondly, If thou wouldſt have thy Reproofs ſucceſsful, reprove with all Gentleneſs and Meekneſs, without giving any railing or reviling Terms. He that mingles Reproach with *Reproof*, engages a Man's Reputation to ſide with his Vices: For whilſt we

we ſhew any Bitterneſs in our *Reproofs*, and give them in villifying and ignominious Language, the Vehicle will hinder the Operation of the Phyſick. For they will look like the upbraidings of an Enemy; and it is a thing moſt abhorrent unto Nature, to follow the Counſels and Advice of an Enemy. And therefore the *Apoſtle* chargeth us,

Gal. 6. 1. *Gal.* 6. 1. *Brethren, if a Man be overtaken in a fault, you that are ſpiritual, reſtore ſuch an one in the ſpirit of Meekneſs, conſidering thy ſelf, leſt thou be alſo tempted.* Which laſt Clauſe intimates to us, that we ought to deal as tenderly with a fallen Brother, as we would deſire to be dealt with our ſelves, were we in the ſame condition. For having the ſame corrupt Nature, and being ſubject to the like Temptations, we may

may likewiſe, through God's dereliction of us, fall into the ſame Miſcarriages. Now wouldſt thou take it well, if any ſhould revile and reprove thee, condemn thee for a rotten Hypocrite, as *Job*'s Friends did him; or draw hideous black Conſequences from every failing and weakneſs of thine? Certainly thou wouldſt not interpret this to be friendly and candid dealing: No more do thou with others. It is a true Saying, that he who would know his own Faults, had need have either a faithful Friend, or a bitter Enemy; they will both be ſure to do it to the full. But then the difference is, that an Enemy's *Reproofs* are uſually joined with *Reproaches*, and when we are fallen, he will ſtand and inſult over us. But a true Chriſtian Friend

Friend will faithfully repreſent our condition to us, pitty us in it, and endeavour to help and raiſe us out of it. And ſuch ſhould we be to all, not railing on them for Hypocrites, or loſt and deſperate Apoſtates, for this certainly is not the way to reduce them, but rather to confirm and harden them in their Sins. We ſhould not gripe nor preſs their Wounds, but rather gently anoint and chafe them. Our *Reproofs* ſhould be as Oyl, ſmooth and lenitive, to ſoak into and ſupple the Part affected. And therefore the *Apoſtle* again exhorts us, *in meekneſs to inſtruct thoſe that oppoſe themſelves.* But whilſt we exclaim againſt them with bitter Invectives, and dip all our *Reproofs* in Gall and *Satyr*, we may quickly make them loath the Medicine rather than the Diſeaſe,

2 Tim. 2. 25.

and

and ſooner break their Heads with ſuch Rebukes, than their Hearts for their Offences.

Thirdly, Though our *Reproofs* muſt be meek and gentle, yet muſt they be quick and vivacious alſo. For as Charity requires the one, ſo doth Zeal the other: And the beſt and moſt equal Temper, is rightly to mix theſe two, that at once we may ſhew Meekneſs to his Perſon, (*for the Wrath of Man worketh not the Righteouſneſs of God*) and Sharpneſs againſt his Sin, (for a remiſs Reprover will but make a ſlow Penitent.) We ought ſo to reprove, that he may not think we only jeſt and dally with him, and for this it is neceſſary that we do it with all Seriouſneſs, Gravity and Authority, not playing about the Wound, but ſearching into

3. *Reproof muſt be quick and vivacious.*

James 1.20.

into the very depth and bottom of it. And therefore we muſt uſe ſuch words as are moſt ſignificant of our meaning, moſt expreſſive of our Grief and Sorrow for him, and which we think moſt apt to expoſe the *Vice* that we *reprove*, and make it moſt odious and hateful, keeping ſtill within the bounds of a ſober and friendly Redargution. Hence the *Apoſtle* gives *Titus* this Advice, *Rebuke them ſharply, that they may be ſound in the Faith.* If they want Salt and Vinegar, ſpare them not. This poſſibly may cleanſe thoſe Wounds that elſe would feſter and putrify. But here is required much ſpiritual Prudence to know how to ſuit *Reproof*, according to the different Conditions and Tempers of the Perſons you deal with. Some muſt be launcht

Tit. 1. 13.

and

and ſearche to the very Quick before they can be healed. Others require a gentle Hand. If they be proud and ſtubborn, they need Corroſives. But for thoſe who are naturally meek and mild, a meek and mild Courſe will be eaſieſt and moſt effectual. The Tempers and Caſes of particular Chriſtians are ſo various, that there can be no Rules given that may be applicable to every Condition. This muſt of neceſſity be left to your Prudence and Diſcretion. Only this Rule is infallible, Be ſure you flatter none in their Vices, extenuate not their Sins; when thou com'ſt to *reprove* them, do it not in ſport: Let them ſee thou art in very good earneſt, and tell them their Sin, as it is in it ſelf, without mincing the matter, or the circumſtances

ſtances of it. For Men are always apt to impute ſomewhat of the *Reproof* to the ſeverity of him that gives it, rather than to the demerits of their own Offences. And therefore, if thou thy ſelf ſhalt ſpeak but ſlightly of their Sins, they will be ready to conclude that they were none, or at leaſt ſo ſmall, that it was nothing but Officiouſneſs, and the love of Cenſuring made thee take notice of them.

Reproof ought to be given privately.

Fourthly, Let all thy *Reproofs* be given as ſecretly and privately as poſſibly thou canſt; otherwiſe thou wilt ſeem not ſo much to aim at thy Brother's Reformation, as at his Shame and Confuſion. For if (as the Wiſeman tells us) a loud and clamorous Benediction given too officiouſly, is ſo far from being a Bleſſing, that it is but a Curſe and a

Prov. 27. 14.

Shame

Shame to a Man's Friend. Certainly then a publick clamorous *Reproof* muſt only tend to the Shame and Reproach of them that receive it. Indeed there are ſome who offend openly before many: Theſe, (if there be no fear of irritating them to do worſe) we ought openly to rebuke, and to give them their *Reproof* in the Company where they have given the *Offence*, ſo ſaith the Apoſtle, *Thoſe that Sin rebuke before all*; that is, ſuppoſing that their Sins be open and publick. But for others whoſe Sins and Miſcarriages have been private, and only known to our ſelves and a few others, we ought to reprove them in ſecret, and to be tender not only of their Souls, but of their Reputation alſo. So is the Counſel of our Saviour, *If thy Brother ſhall treſpaſs*

1 Tim. 5. 20

Matth. 18. 15.

paſs againſt thee, go and tell him his Fault between thee and him alone. And indeed this is a neceſſary piece of Prudence, not only to preſerve his Reputation and good Name as much as may be, but alſo,

1. *To preſerve the Reputation of Religion.*

Firſt, To preſerve the Reputation of Religion it ſelf, which a more publick divulging of his Offences might much impair and diſcredit. And,

2. *To hinder the ſpreading of an evil Example.*

Secondly, To hinder the ſpreading of an evil Example, which alſo perhaps ſome or other would make uſe of, to encourage them in the like Tranſgreſſions. And,

3. *That they may be ſerviceable.*

Thirdly, To preſerve him ſerviceable for the future; for by reporting his Miſcarriages, thou leſſeneſt his Credit, and thereby rendreſt him leſs capable of doing good than he was before.

For

For though he may recover himſelf out of the Snare of the *Devil*, and his Wound be healed, yet if his Faults have been made publick, the Scar will ſtill remain: And this will be ſuch a blemiſh to him, that having loſt much of his repute among Men, he will likewiſe loſe much of thoſe Advantages he formerly had of doing good in the World; and thou by thy *imprudent Reproofs* be the cauſe of it. Upon all theſe Accounts it is neceſſary that thy *Reproofs* be managed with the greateſt Secreſy and Privacy that may be: For, as St. *Auſtine* ſpeaks well, if whilſt thou alone knoweſt thy Brother to have offended, and yet wilt rebuke him before all, *Non es corrector ſed proditor*; Thou art not a Reprover, but a Betrayer.

5. *Superiours muſt be reproved reſpectfully.*

Fifthly, Reprove not one who is greatly thy Superiour, unleſs it be at a reſpectful diſtance. Towards ſuch we muſt not uſe down-right and blunt *Rebukes*; but rather inſinunate things into them with Addreſs and Artifice. What ſays *Elihu*, *Is it fit to ſay to a King, Thou art wicked, and to Princes, Ye are ungodly?* And indeed in this Caſe uſually, it is moſt fit and decent that thy *Reproofs* ſhould not carry their own Shape and Form, but diſguiſe them rather into Parables or Intreaties, or into any ſuch humble and becoming Method: Yet withal let ſo much appear, as that they may well enough know thy drift and intent. For it becomes the Wiſdom and Station of Inferiours, ſo to order their Speech, that if it can but be interpreted as a *Reproof*, their

Job 34. 18.

Su-

Superiours may and will certainly know they meant it for ſuch. Thus the *Apoſtle* bids us, *Rebuke not an Elder, but rather intreat him as a Father.* For becauſe their Place and Calling required Reſpect and Reverence, therefore the *Apoſtle* would not have them bluntly Rebuked, but that the *Reproof* ſhould be clad in another dreſs, that they might appear to be rather Intreaties than Rebukes. 1 Tim. 5. 1.

We may obſerve likewiſe that when *Nathan* was ſent immediately by God to reprove King *David*, he doth not attack him directly, and fall rudely upon him for his Adultery and Murder, but cloaths his Speech in a Parable, and when he had ſo repreſented the heinouſneſs of his Sin, ſo as by that means to make him firſt reprove and

condemn himſelf, then he tells him, *Thou art the Man.*

6. *We muſt not be guilty of the Sins we reprove others for.*

Sixthly, If thou wouldſt have thy *Reproofs* effectual, eſpecially beware that thou thy ſelf art not guilty of thoſe Sins which thou reproveſt in another. It were indeed a Temper to be wiſh'd and pray'd for, that we could only reſpect how righteous the *Reproof* were, and not how righteous the Perſon is who gives it. For there is no more reaſon to reject ſound Admonition, becauſe it comes from an unſound Heart, than there is to ſtop our Ears againſt good Counſel becauſe it is delivered perhaps by an unſavoury Breath. Yet ſo it is, that when Men of defiled Conſciences and Converſations reprove others, they are apt to juſtify themſelves by recriminating, or

elſe

elſe to think they do but ſport and jeſt with them: Or thirdly to hate them for groſs Hypocrites and Diſſemblers; or laſtly, to think they do but envy them their Sins, and that they would ingroſs all to themſelves. It was a true Obſervation of *Pliny* in his *Epiſtles*, Lib. 8. Epiſt. 22. That there are ſome, *Qui ſic aliorum viſiis iraſcuntur, quaſi invideant*: Who are ſo angry at other Mens Vices, as if they they envied them. It cannot be hoped that the *Reproof* of ſuch ſhould ever take place. But when a Man of a clear and unſpoted Name ſhall *reprove* the Sins and Vices of others, his *Rebukes* carry Authority with them, and if they cannot reform, yet at leſt muſt they needs daunt and ſilence the Offenders that they ſhall have nothing

to reply, no Subterfuges nor Evaſions, but they muſt needs be convinced that their Sins are as evil, as he repreſents them by his own Care and Caution to be avoided.

5. *Motives for reproving our Brother.*

Fiftly, The only Thing that remains is to propound to you ſome *Motives* that may quicken you to the conſcientious diſcharge of this much neglected Duty. And I ſhall but name ſome few, and leave them to your conſideration to be farther preſt upon you. And here next to the expreſs Command of Almighty God, whoſe Authority alone ought to prevail againſt all the Difficulties that we either find or fancy in the way of Obedience thereunto:

Benefit of reproving others.

Conſider, *Firſt*, the great benefit that may redound both to the *Reprover*, and *Reproved*.

Firſt,

First, Thou ſhalt hereby provide thy ſelf a Friend that may take the ſame liberty to *reprove* thee, when it ſhall be needful, and for thy great good. And it may very well be thought that the *Apoſtle* upon this Account requires us to *Reſtore our fallen Brother, with meek Reproofs, conſidering our ſelves, leſt we alſo be tempted*: That is, that hereby we may purchaſe a true Friend, who will be as faithful to us, as we have been to him. However, certainly it is the beſt and moſt generous way of procuring to our ſelves true Love and Reſpect from thoſe whom we have thus reformed. So ſays *Solomon, Rebuke a wiſe Man, and he will love thee.* And in another place, ſays he, *He that Rebuketh a Man, afterwards ſhall find more favour than he that flattereth with his Tongue.* Gal. 6. 1. Prov. 9. 8. Prov. 28. 23.

Se-

2. *Secondly*, Thou wilt hereby intitle thy ſelf to that great and
Dan. 12. 3. precious Promiſe, *Daniel* 12. *That they that be wiſe, ſhall ſhine as the Brightneſs of the Firmament; and they that turn many to Righteouſneſs, as the Stars for ever and ever.* And to that other of
Prov. 24. 25. the wiſe Man, *To them that rebuke the Wicked, ſhall be Delight, and a good Bleſſing ſhall come upon them.*

3. *Thirdly*, Thou ſhalt increaſe thy own Graces and Comforts more than poſſibly thou couldſt do by ſeparating thy ſelf from them. Thy Graces will be more confirmed, becauſe *reproving* of others will ingage thee to a greater Watchfulneſs over thy ſelf. Thy Comforts alſo will be increaſed, becauſe a conſcientious diſcharge of this Duty, will be to thee a great E-

vidence

vidence of the integrity and ſincerity of thy Heart.

Firſt. The practice of this Duty will be greatly profitable unto him that is reproved. How knoweſt thou but it may be a means to turn him from his Iniquity, and ſo thou *ſhalt prevent a Multitude of Sins, and ſave a Soul from Death.* And hereby likewiſe we ſhall fruſtrate one of the great Deſigns and Artifices of the Devil, which is, to allure Men to Sin by the examples of thoſe Wickedneſſes that paſs uncheckt and uncontroul'd in the World. 2. Jam. 5. 20.

Secondly, Conſider that we our ſelves alſo were diſobedient and fooliſh, ſerving divers Luſts and Pleaſures, but were wrought upon either by publick or private Reproof. And why then ſhould not we uſe the Tit. 3. 3.

ſame

ſame Charity towards others, which God hath been pleaſed to make effectual towards us.

Thirdly, Conſider that the *Text* makes it an apparent ſign of hating our Brother, if we forbear juſtly to reprove him.

1 Joh. 3.15. *Thou ſhalt not hate thy Brother in thy Heart: thou ſhalt in any wiſe reprove him.* So that he who reproves not his Brother, hates him. Now *he that hates his Brother is a Murderer*, ſays St. *John*. *And no Murderer hath Eternal Life.* Yea, we are guilty of *Soul-Murder*, which is ſo much the more heinous, by how much the Soul is more precious than the Body.

Fourthly, Conſider that the performance of this Duty, were it more univerſal, would be the apteſt and readieſt means to prevent *Schiſm* and *Diviſion*.

The

The grand pretence for Separation, is the wickedneſs of many who are *Church-Members.* Now our *Saviour's* Method is, that ſuch ſhould be firſt reproved and admoniſh'd, before they be caſt out; but it is a moſt prepoſterous and headlong Courſe that thouſands in our Days take, who caſt themſelves out of the Communion of the *Church*, for the Sins of thoſe who deſerve to be caſt out; and rather than they will perform this ingrateful Work of *Reproof*, chooſe to ſeparate; whereas if they would make uſe of our *Saviour Chriſt's* Advice, to reprove privately, and in caſe of Obſtinacy, to convict publickly, there would be, as no need, ſo no Pretence left for Separation; but either their private Reproofs would prevail to reform, or their publick Mat. 18. 15, 16.

lick Complaints and Accuſations, to remove Offenders.

Fifthly, Conſider, that the neglect of this Duty, brings the Sin and Guilt of others upon your own Souls. See for this that Scripture, *Epheſians* 5.

Eph. 5. 11. 11. *Have no Fellowſhip with the unfruitful Works of Darkneſs, but rather reprove them.* If we reprove them not, we are Partakers of their evil Deeds, and deſerve to be Partakers of their Torments.

FINIS.

The

The Dreadfulneſs of God's Wrath againſt Sinners explained.

IN SEVERAL SERMONS.

HEB. 10. 30, 31.

For we know him that hath ſaid, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompence, ſaith the Lord; and again, the Lord ſhall judg his People.

It is a fearful thing to fall into the Hands of the Living God.

An Introduction.

THere are two principal *Attributes* of God, which the *Scripture* propounds to us as the moſt powerful and effi-

efficacious Motives to reſtrain us from Sin: And they are his *Mercy*, and his *Juſtice*. *Mercy* tho it be a ſoft, yet is it a ſtrong Argument to encourage us to Purity and Holineſs. And therefore ſays the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 2. 4. *The Goodneſs of God leadeth us to Repentance.* And certainly that *Mercy* that expreſſeth it ſelf ſo ready to pardon Sin, cannot but lay a mighty Obligation upon the Ingenuity of a Chriſtian Spirit to abſtain from the commiſſion of it. He that can encourage himſelf in Wickedneſs, upon the conſideration of the infinite Free-Grace of God, doth but ſpurn thoſe very Bowels that yern towards him, and ſtrike at God with his own Golden Scepter, yea he tares abroad thoſe Wounds which were at firſt opened for him, and caſts the

Rom. 2. 4.

Blood

Blood of his Saviour back again in his Face. But becauſe Ingenuity is periſht from off the Earth, and Men are generally more apt to be wrought upon by Arguments drawn from Fear than Love, therefore the *Scripture* propounds to us the conſideration of the dreadful Juſtice of God arrayed in all the terrible Circumſtances of it, that if Mercy cannot allure us, Juſtice at leaſt might affright us from our Sins. And as thoſe who are to travel thorow *Wilderneſſes* and *Deſerts*, carry Fire with them to terrify wild and ravenous Beaſts, and to ſecure themſelves from their Aſſaults: So doth the great God, who hath to deal with brutiſh Men, Men more ſavage than wild Beaſts, he kindles a Fire about him, and appears to

them all in Flames and Fury; that ſo he might fright them from their bold Attempts, who otherwiſe would be ready, *to run upon his Neck and upon the thick Boſſes of his Buckler.*

Job 15. 26.

And therefore in the four precedent *Verſes*, we find the *Apoſtle* threatning moſt tremendous Judgments againſt all that ſhould wilfully trangreſs, after they had received the knowledg of the Truth. He tells us, *Verſe* 26. *That there remains no more ſacrifice for their Sins*: Nothing to expiate their Guilt, but that they themſelves muſt fall a Burnt-Sacrifice to the offended Juſtice of God, conſumed with that fiery Indignation that ſhall certainly ſeize and prey upon them for ever. And in *v.* 28, 29. he ſets forth the exceeding Dreadfulneſs of their

Heb. 10. 28, 29.

Judg-

Judgment, by a compariſon between thoſe that violated the *Law of Moſes*, and thoſe that *renounce and annul the Law of Chriſt*. *He that deſpiſed* Moſes's *Law*, who himſelf was but a Servant, and his Laws conſiſted of inferiour and leſs ſpiritual Ordinances, yet a Deſpiſer and Tranſgreſſor of theſe was *to die without Mercy*; certainly much ſorer Judgments await thoſe, who reject the *Laws of Chriſt*, and trample him, who is the *Son* and *Lord* of the Houſe, under foot; accounting his Blood unholy and prophane, renouncing his Merits, and blaſpheming the Holy Spirit by which our *Saviour* acted: Such as theſe, ſays the *Apoſtle*, ſhall eternally periſh with leſs Mercy, than thoſe that *died without Mercy*. Where by the way obſerve the ſtrange

Emphaſis that the *Apoſtle* lays upon this dreadful Comminati-on; he tells us they ſhall be ſorer puniſh'd, than thoſe that are puniſhed without Mercy; to let us know, that as there are tranſcendent Glories, ſuch as *Eye hath not ſeen, nor Ear heard, nor can it enter into the Heart of Man to* conceive, reſerved in the higheſt Heavens for thoſe that love God; ſo alſo are there Woes and Torments, ſuch as *Eye hath not ſeen, Ear heard, nor can it enter into the Heart of Man to* conceive, how great and inſupportable they are, prepared in *Hell* for thoſe that hate him. They ſhall die with leſs Mercy, than thoſe that die without Mercy.

Now that we might not wonder at ſuch a *Paradox* as this, the *Apoſtle* gives the Reaſon of it

it in my Text, *For we know him that hath ſaid, Vengeance belongeth unto me*, it is the Vengeance of God, *and a falling into the Hands of God*, and therefore it is no wonder if their Puniſhments ſhall be beyond all extremity. They fall under the Power and Wrath of an infinite God, which when we have heaped Superlatives upon Superlatives, yet ſtill we muſt expreſs defectively, and all that we can conceive of it falls vaſtly ſhort of reaching but a faint and languiſhing reſemblance thereof. It is a State ſo full of perfect Miſery, that Miſery it ſelf is too eaſy a Name to give it; yea, whatſoever we can ſpeak moſt appoſitly of it, is but diminiſhing it; for becauſe it is the *Wrath* and *Vengeance* of an infinite God, it can no more be known by us, than

God himſelf. Plunge your Thoughts as deep into it as you can, yet ſtill there remains an infinite *Abyſſe* which you can never fathom. And O that the conſideration of this *Wrath* might cauſe us all to tremble before this great and terrible God, that we might ſo fear it, as never to feel it; and be perſwaded to fall down at his Feet, that we may never fall into his Hands. And that we may be thus affected, I have choſen this *Text* to ſet forth the Greatneſs and Dreadfulneſs of that Wrath and Vengeance which the righteous God will execute upon all ſtubborn and diſobedient Wretches.

A *Text* that ſpeaks to us, as God did to the *Iſraelites* from *Mount Sinai*, out of the midſt of the Fire and Blackneſs, Darkneſs

neſs and Tempeſt, in the Voice of a Trumpet. And truly we have all need to have ſuch rouſing Truths frequently inculcated upon us, for the beſt of us are *Lethargical*, and though ſometimes when our Conſciences are pincht hard by a ſevere and ſearching Truth, we ſtart up and look abroad, yet as ſoon as the preſent Impreſſion is over, we ſuddenly cloſe our Eyes, and fall aſleep again in Sin and Security. There is a ſtrange Dullneſs and Stupor hath ſeiz'd us, that we can no longer keep waking than we are ſhook.

And therefore as we uſe to apply Fire and burning Coals to *Lethargick* Perſons to awaken them; ſo we have need to heap *Coals of Fire* upon Mens Heads, to ſpeak with *fiery Tongues*, and thunder Woe and

Wrath and Judgments againſt them, that we may rouze the ſecure ſtupid World, and ſo at leaſt ſcorch them into Life and Senſe.

In the Words we have theſe two Parts obſervable.

Firſt, An Appropriation of Vengeance unto God, *Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompence, ſaith the Lord.*

Secondly, The Dreadfulneſs of that Vengeance inferred, from the conſideration of the Author and Inflicter of it, *It is a fearful thing to fall into the Hands of the living God.*

I begin with the *firſt* of theſe, God's appropriating and challenging Vengeance unto himſelf. *Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompence, ſaith the Lord.* Which Paſſage the *Apoſtle* cites out of *Deuteronomy ch.* 32.35,36.

Deut. 32. 35.

To

To me belongeth Vengeance and Recompence, and the Lord ſhall judge his People. It is his great and royal Prerogative that he doth ſometimes make uſe of in inflicting Judgments upon the Wicked in this World, but moſt eſpecially in the World to come. And to this future Vengeance, the Words ought particularly to be applyed. Now from this conſideration, That Vengeance in a peculiar Manner belongs unto the great God, hence we may obſerve,

That God himſelf will be the immediate Inflicter of the Puniſhments of the Damned.

It is therefore here likewiſe called a *falling into the Hands of the living God*, which denotes his immediate Efficiency in their Torments.

It is true, God doth uſe ſeveral Inſtruments of Torture in Hell. There is the *Worm that never dies*, and *the Fire that never goes out*, which I ſuppoſe to be not only a *Metaphorical*, but poſſibly a *Material Fire*, elevated to ſuch a degree of Subtilty, as that it ſhall at once torture the Soul, and not conſume the Body. And this Fire the *Devils*, who are their Executioners, will be ſtill very officiouſly raking about them, uſing all their malicious Art to increaſe their eternal Miſery. But yet theſe things are but ſmall Appendages, and only the ſlighter Circumſtances of their Torments; the moſt exact and intolerable part of their Torture they ſhall feel inflicted upon them from another *Fire*, an intelligent Everlaſting, and therefore an unquench-

quenchable Fire, and that is God himſelf, for ſo he is ſaid to be, *Heb.* 12. *ult.* *Our God is a conſuming Fire.* Heb. 12. 29.

And though we ordinarily ſpeak only of *Hell Fire*, yet not only *Hell*, but *Heaven* it ſelf is full of this *Fire*; conſult that place *Iſa.* 33. 14. *Who among us ſhall dwell with the devouring Fire? who among us ſhall dwell with everlaſting Burnings?* Would not one think at the very firſt ſound of the Words, that the *Prophet* ſpeaks only of ſuch as ſhould be damned, of ſuch as ſhould be caſt into Hell, to remain there in everlaſting Fire and Burnings? And demands of them, who among them could endure this? No, but it appears plainly, that this *Fire* and *Burning* is in Heaven it ſelf, and the *Prophet* by putting this Queſtion, *Iſa.* 33. 14.

on, *Who ſhall dwell with the devouring Fire and everlaſting Burnings?* asks who ſhall be ſaved, and not who ſhall be deſtroyed? And therefore in the 15*th Verſe*, he tells us, that he ſhall do it, *who walketh uprightly, and ſpeaketh uprightly, that deſpiſeth the gain of Oppreſſion, that ſhaketh his Hands from holding of Bribes, that ſtoppeth his Ears from hearing of Blood, and ſhutteth his Eyes from ſeeing of Evil.* Such a one ſhall dwell with the devouring Fire; that is, he ſhall for ever dwell and remain with God in Heaven. So that we ſee God is a *Fire* both to the Wicked, and to the Godly; to the Wicked he is a *penetrating torturing Fire*, and they are combuſtible Matter for the Wrath and Vengeance of God to prey upon; but to the Godly he is a *purifying*

ing and cheriſhing Fire only. And as *Lightning* doth not only cleanſe and refine the *Air*, but rends *Trees* and *Rocks* in pieces, diſſolves *Metals*, and breaks thorow whatſoever oppoſeth it in its paſſage: So this great and *Almighty Fire* only refreſheth and comforteth the Godly, whereas it breaks and tears the Wicked in pieces, and melts them down like Wax before the ſcorching Heat of it. And though I deny not but there may be ſomewhat like that which we commonly apprehend when we ſpeak of *Hell*, ſome unquenchable Flames prepared by the Wiſdom and Power of God for the eternal Torment of thoſe Wretches that ſhall be caſt thereinto; yet withal I think that their moſt exquiſite Torments ſhall be from that *Fire* that is God himſelf. For

For if we obſerve it, it is ſaid to be *everlaſting Fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels*, Matth. 25. 41. Now the *Devils* are ſpiritual Subſtances, and flames of *Fire* themſelves. *He maketh his Angels Spirits, and his Miniſters*, that is his Miniſtring Spirits, whether good or evil, whether the Miniſters of his Wrath and Vengeance, or the Miniſters of his Mercy, *He makes them Flames of Fire*, Pſalm 104. 4. They are ſuch piercing and ſubtile Flames that *Lightning* it ſelf is but groſs and dull compared to them: Yet here is a *Fire* that ſhall even torture *Fire* it ſelf, a *Fire* that ſhall burn thoſe Flames of *Fire*; and that is God, who being a Spirit, and the God of Spirits, can eaſily pierce and inſinuate into the very Centre of their Beings. So that the

Matth. 25. 41.

Pſalm 104. 4.

the Damned in *Hell* ſhall for ever find themſelves burnt up with a double *Fire*, a *Material Fire*, ſuted and adapted to impreſs Pain and Torment upon the Body, yet without waſting and conſuming it; And an *inviſible intellectual Fire*, that ſhall prey upon the Soul, and fill it with unſpeakable Anguiſh and Horror, and this is no other than God himſelf.

And in this there is a true Parallel between *Heaven* and *Hell*; for as in *Heaven*, though there are many created Excellencies and Glories which contribute to the *Beatitude* of the Saints, yet their moſt ſubſtantial Happineſs is derived from their immediate fruition of God: So likewiſe in *Hell*, though there be many created and (if I may ſo call them) many invented

Tor-

Tortures, yet the higheſt and moſt intolerable Miſery of the Damned, is from the immediate infliction and infuſion of the Divine Wrath into them, which no Creature doth or can convey to them in ſuch a Manner and Meaſure as they there feel it, but God himſelf pours the full Vials of it into their Souls. And therefore as the Saints are called *Veſſels of Mercy*, ſo the Wicked are called *Veſſels of Wrath, fitted for Deſtruction*, Rom. 9. 22. Such Veſſels into which God will pour in of his Vengeance, and fill brimm-full with his Wrath and Fury for ever.

Rom. 9. 22.

The Apoſtle, 2 *Theſſ.* 1. 9. ſpeaking of wicked Men, tells us, *That they ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting Deſtruction from the Preſence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power.* Where we muſt

1 Theſ. 1. 9.

muſt not think that this Phraſe [*From the Preſence of the Lord*] denotes only that part of their Puniſhment which we call *pœna Damni*, or the puniſhment of Loſs; but rather that it denotes the efficient Cauſe of their *pœna Senſus*, or the puniſhment of Senſe; not that their puniſhment ſhall only be, to be for ever baniſhed from his Preſence, but that this Preſence ſhall be active in inflicting Puniſhments upon them, and we may well read it thus, *They ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting Deſtruction, by the Preſence of the Lord, and by the Glory of his Power*: For as God's glorious Power is effective of their Deſtruction, ſo alſo is his Preſence, the dread Preſence of that conſuming and tormenting Fire.

And thus much briefly for the *firſt* Thing obſervable in

the *Text*, namely God's appropriating Vengeance unto himself, *Vengeance belongeth unto me*, and it is a *falling into the Hands of the Living God.*

2. I come now to the *second* Thing obſervable in the Words, and that is the dreadfulneſs of this Vengeance inferred, from the conſideration of the Author and Inflicter of it; for becauſe it is Divine Vengeance, and a falling into the Hands of the living God, therefore it muſt needs be very terrible. And here I ſhall *firſt* take notice of thoſe Expreſſions that my *Text* affords, to ſet forth the Terrour of this Wrath. And then conſider other Demonſtrations of it. And here,

1. *Firſt*, Conſider that all other Vengeance is as nothing in compariſon of that which God takes on a damned Soul. You may

may poſſibly have heard of ſtrange and horrid Revenges that ſome cruel Men have carved out unto themſelves, putting thoſe that have offended them to ſuch Tortures as were altogether unfit for Men either to inflict or ſuffer. All *Hiſtories* abound with ſuch *Barbarities*. I am loth to offend your Ears ſo much as to recount them, let us only take an eſtimate by the dreadful Revenge that *David* took on the *Ammonites*: 2 *Samuel* 12. laſt. where it is ſaid, *He put them under Saws, and Harrows of Iron, and made them paſs thorow the Brick-Kilns.* And all this Severity, (if not to ſay Cruelty) was to revenge the inſolent Affront done to his *Embaſſadours*. It is doubtleſs no ſmall Torture to be burnt alive, for Fire is a ſearching Thing, and

2 Sam. 12. laſt.

eats deep into the Senſes; but yet this kind of Death was a quick and merciful diſpatch in compariſon of the others: Think what it is to be ſtretcht along, and to have the ſharp ſpikes of an Harrow tare up your Fleſh, and draw out your Bowels and Bones after them: Or what it is to be ſawn aſunder in the midſt, and to have thoſe ſmall Teeth eat their way ſlowly thorow you, while they jarr againſt your Bones, and pull out your Nerves and Sinews thread by thread. How many *Deaths* think you were theſe poor miſerable Creatures compelled to ſuffer before they were permitted to die. Yet alas! theſe, and all the witty Tortures that ever were invented by the greateſt Maſters of Cruelty, are nothing in compariſon of the Ven-

Vengeance that God will take upon Sinners in *Hell*: And therefore he ſays, *Vengeance is mine, I will recompence.* As if he ſhould ſay, alas, all that you can do one to another ſignifies nothing, it is not to be called, nor accounted *Vengeance*, that is too great a Name for ſuch poor Effects. It is a Prerogative that God challengeth to himſelf to be the *Avenger*: And whatever Creatures meddle with, if they have not a Commiſſion from him, it is their Sin; and therefore private Perſons, whom he hath not inveſted with any ſuch Authority, ought not to take upon them to avenge their own cauſe. Or if they have a Commiſſion, yet all their execution of *Vengeance* is but feeble and weak. We find in *Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory* that the *Holy Martyrs* have often

mockt at all the *cruel Tortures* of their inraged *Perſecutors*, and God hath either taken from them all ſenſe of their Pain, or elſe given them in ſuch ſtrong Conſolations, that they have triumph'd and exulted in all the Extremity of them; O how have they hugg'd the *Stake* at which they were to be burnt, courted the *Beaſts* that were to devour them, and been ſtretched upon the *Rack* with as much content, as formerly they have ſtretcht themſelves upon their Beds; and not ſo much ſuffered, as enjoyed their Deaths! God hath ſo mercifully taken off the Edg and Keeneſs of their *Torments*, to ſhew that *Vengeance* is his Right and Due, and that they are but contemptible things that one Man can inflict upon another, ſcarce worthy to be called

called *Vengeance*. And beſides, let it be never ſo ſharp and cutting, yet it cannot be long durable; the more intolerable any *Torments* are, the ſooner do they work our eſcape from them. And though Spite and Malice may wiſh the Perpetuity of our Pain, yet it is not poſſible for mortal Men to proſecute an immortal Revenge, the Death, either of them, or our ſelves, will put a period to our Sufferings. And what a ſmall matter is it to undergo pain for a few days only, this is not worthy to be called *Vengeance*, nor is it like that which the great God will inflict which is both inſupportable and eternal. And therefore,

Secondly, The Apoſtle calls it *a falling into the Hands of the Living God*. And this denotes to us the 2.

Perpetuity and Eternity of this *Vengeance*. God for ever lives to inflict it, and Sinners ſhall for ever live to ſuffer it; for they fall into his Hands. God hath, as it were, leaſed out a Life to every wicked Man, he hath his Term of Years ſet him, wherein he lives to himſelf, enjoying his Luſts, and the Pleaſures and Profits of this preſent World; and all this while *Vengeance* intermedles but little with him: but when his Life is expir'd, and his Years run out, he then falls into the Hands of the great Lord of all, and becomes the Poſſeſſion of his *Vengeance* and *Juſtice* for ever. And then, *he is the Living God*, and ſuch wicked Wretches muſt for ever live to endure the moſt dreadful execution of his Power and Wrath. Were there any Term or Period

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ſet to their *Torments*, ſhould they when they have endured them thouſands of thouſands of Years, afterwards be annihilated, the expectation of this Releaſe, at the laſt, would give them ſome ſupport; yea, it would be ſome ſolace to them in their Sufferings to think that at laſt they ſhould be freed from them: But this is the *Accent* of their Miſery, and that which makes them altogether deſperate, that it is for ever; for ever they muſt lie and wallow in thoſe Flames that ſhall never be quenched, and ſhall always be bit and ſtung with that *Worm that ſhall never die*, they are fallen into the *Hands of the living God*, who will never let them go as long as he lives, that is, never to all Eternity. He is a conſuming *Fire*, but yet ſpends not any part of his Fewel,

wel, he conſumes without diminiſhing them, and deſtroys, but yet ſtill perpetuates their being. A wiſe and intelligent Fire, (as *Minutius* calls him) that devours the Damned, but yet ſtill repairs them, and by tormenting ſtill nouriſhes them for future Torments. *Sapiens ille ignis, urit & reficit, carpit & nutrit.* And when they have lain burning in this *Fire* all the Ages that *Arithmetick* can ſum up, Millions after Thouſands, and Thouſands of Millions, yet ſtill it is but the beginning of their Sorrows. O think with your ſelves how long and tedious a little time ſeems to you when you are in pain, you complain then that Time hath leaden Feet, and wiſh the Days and Hours would roll away faſter with you, and you never find them

them ſo ſlow paced, as when they paſs over a *ſick Bed.* Oh then what will it be when you ſhall lie ſweltring under the *dread Wrath and Vengeance of the living God*, the intolerableneſs of your Pain and Torment will make every Day ſeem an Age, and every Year as long as Eternity, and yet you muſt lie there an Eternity of thoſe long Years. Me thinks this conſideration of *Eternal Torments* ſhould aſtoniſh the Heart, and ſink the Spirits of every wicked Wretch; for though they were not to be ſo exceſſively ſharp as they are, yet the *Eternity* of them, is that which ſhould make them altogether intolerable. There is ſcarce any pain ſo ſmall but it would make us deſperate, were we aſſured it would never wear off, that we ſhould never obtain any

ny eaſe or freedom from it. What ever Pain we ſuffer, our uſual incouragement unto Patience is, that ſhortly it will be over: But now in *Hell* there is no period fixt to their *Torments*, they are all eternal, and therefore whatſoever they are for the Degree and Meaſure of them, yet are they utterly intolerable, at leaſt for their Duration and Continuance. Couldſt thou ſhove away Millions of Years with a Wiſh, yet all this would avail nothing; for there are as many Years in Eternity as there are Moments, and as many Millions of Years as there are Years, that is, it is an infinite and boundleſs Duration, and when thou haſt ſtruck thy Thoughts as deep into it as thou canſt, yet ſtill thou art but at the top of the heap, and it is

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ſtill a whole Eternity to the bottom.

Thirdly, Conſider alſo that the *Wrath* and *Vengeance* of God is moſt dreadful, not only from the Eternal Continuance and Duration thereof, but alſo from the exceſſive Anguiſh and Smart of thoſe *Torments* that he inflicts; nothing that we have ever felt, or can feel in this preſent Life, can come into any compariſon with them; and therefore the *Text* calls it, *A falling into the Hands of God.* Here on Earth God's Hand doth ſometimes fall upon us, and it falls very heavy too, and lays upon us ſore and weighty Burthens; but theſe are nothing conſiderable to our falling into the Hands of God. There is as much difference between his Wrath and Diſpleaſure falling upon us, and 3.

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our falling upon it, as there is between our having a few drops of a Showre falling upon us, and our falling into a River, or into the Sea, and being overwhelmed with the great Waters thereof; and yet how dreadful is it when God's Hand only falls upon us! It was a ſad Complaint of the *Pſalmiſt*, *Pſalm* 32. 4. *That God's Hand lay heavy upon him.* And *Pſalm* 38. 2. *That God's Hand preſt him ſore.* Grievous Burthens and ſore Preſſures may be laid upon us by this Hand of God, and that both as to outward Afflictions, and inward Troubles.

1. *Firſt*, As to outward Afflictions. How dreadfully doth God ſtretch out his Hand againſt ſome, making wide and terrible Breaches upon them; Some in their Eſtates, ſome in their Re-

Relations, and ſome in their bodily Health and Strength. Have you never been about the ſick Beds of thoſe that have roared out through the extremity of their Pains, when every Limb hath been upon the Rack, and God hath filled them with a Complication of loathſom, tormenting and incurable Diſeaſes? and yet all this is but only a falling of God's Hand upon them.

Secondly, As to inward Troubles: We ſee how God cramps ſome Mens Conſciences, breaths Fire and Flames into their very Souls, and makes deep Wounds in their Spirits, forcing them thorow the extremity of their Anguiſh to cry out, *they are damn'd, they are damn'd;* yea ſome have even wiſht that they were in Hell, ſuppoſing thoſe everlaſting 2.

ing Torments would not be more unſufferable than what they here felt. And indeed theſe inward Troubles are far more grievous than any outward can be. We hear *Heman* crying out, that *becauſe of theſe Terrours of the Lord, he was ready to die from his Youth up. And whilſt he ſuffered this Wrath of God, he was even diſtracted with it*, Pſalm 88. 15. And *Job*, whoſe Patience is celebrated for bearing all his outward Afflictions, his loſs of Eſtate, of his Children, of his Health, with an heroick Conſtancy, (*You have heard*, ſays St. *James*, *of the Patience of* Job) yet when God comes to touch his Spirit with his Wrath, then we hear of his Impatience, he *curſeth the Day of his Birth, and wiſhes that God would deſtroy him, that he would let looſe his Hand and cut him off.*

Pſal. 88. 15.

Job 6. 9.

Job

Job 6. 9. And wherefore are theſe paſſionate Requeſts? why he tell us, Ver. 4. *The Arrows of the Almighty are within me, the Poiſon whereof drinketh up my Spirit: The Terrors of God do ſet themſelves in array againſt me.* And therefore though he could patiently bear all that the rage and ſpite of the Devil could do againſt him, when he toucht his Wealth, when he toucht his Children, yea when he toucht his Body, yet his Patience could no longer hold out, when God came to touch his Soul and Conſcience.

And yet the greateſt Terrors of Conſcience, whether in the Children of God to their Reformation, or in the Wicked to their Deſperation, are ſtill but light and ſmall touches of his Hand in compariſon with what

ſhall be expreſt hereafter on the Damned in *Hell*. For,

1. *Firſt*, To the Godly all theſe Afflictions are mixed with Love and Mercy. They are brought upon them not as *Plagues*, but as *Medicaments* to do them good. But in *Hell* all is Wrath, all is Fury, pure Wrath and Judgment without Mercy. And certainly if thoſe Sufferings which are inflicted in Love, and allay'd with Mercy, are yet ſo very dreadful to the People of God, how dreadful will the Wrath of God be in *Hell*, where it ſhall be pure and unmixed, and nothing put into that Cup which the Damned are there to drink of, but the rankeſt Venome that can be ſqueezed out of all the *Curſes* that ever God hath donounced? And then,

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Secondly, To the Wicked all the Troubles and Terrours which they here indure are nothing in compariſon with what they muſt eternally ſuffer in *Hell*. They are now only ſprinkled with a few drops of God's Wrath, but in *Hell* all his Waves ſhall go over them for ever. Here they do but ſip a little of that Cup, and taſte a little of the Froth of it, and ſhould they drink deeper, Earth could not hold them, but they would grow drunk, and reel and ſtagger into *Hell*; but there they muſt for ever drink the very Dregs of that Cup of Trembling and Aſtoniſhment. And thou who now roareſt and ſtrugleſt like a wild Bull in a Net, when God's Hand is only upon thee, what wilt thou do when thou ſhalt eternally fall into his Mighty 2.

Hands? Thou now cryeſt out of the Intolerableneſs of thy preſent Pain: but, alas, hadſt thou but felt one gripe of the Torments of the Damned in *Hell*; had God and the Devil had but one blow apeice at thee, thou wouldſt chooſe to live for ever here on Earth in the moſt exquiſite Torture that could be deviſed, chooſe to bear the ſharpeſt *Paroxiſms* of the *Stone* or *Gout*, to be ſtretcht upon the Rack, to lye broke upon the Wheel, to have thy Fleſh pluckt off by fiery Pincers; thou wouldſt chooſe to ſuffer all theſe to all Eternity; yea and chooſe them too as Recreations and Divertiſements rather than return again to that place of Torment; where not only the Eternity, but the Smart and Anguiſh of them, is infinite and unconceivable.

able. And as one Day in the *Joys of Heaven* is better than a thouſand Days, nay than a thouſand Years in all the impure and low Delights of Earth: So one Day in the *Torments of Hell*, is far worſe than a thouſand in the ſharpeſt Miſeries we can poſſibly indure in this Life.

Here our Pains uſually are but partial, God aimes and ſhoots with his Arrow but at ſome one part of us: If he wounds our Spirits, yet this inviſible Shaft (like *Lightning*) paſſeth thorow without making a Breach in our Bodies, or in our Eſtates, we have ſtill our Health and our Plenty left us. Or if he ſtrike the Body, uſually it is but in one, or at moſt but in ſome few Places, and we enjoy eaſe in the reſt: But in *Hell*, God doth as it were wrap the

whole Man up in Searcloth, and ſet it on fire round about them, ſo that they are tormented in every part, neither *Soul* nor *Body* eſcaping, nor any Power or Faculty of the one, nor any Part or Member of the other.

When we fall into the Hands of God, we are plunged into an Ocean of Wrath, and are covered all over with his Fury and Indignation; the Underſtanding, Will, Conſcience, Affections, are all as brim-full of Torments as they can hold: For what can be greater Anguiſh to the Mind than to know our Miſery, and to know it to be remedileſs? And what can be greater Anguiſh to the Will and Affections, than moſt ardently and vehemently to deſire freedom from thoſe *Torments*, but yet to diſpair of ever obtaining it? And what

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can fill the Conſcience with greater Anguiſh, than to reflect with infinite Horrour and Regret, that it was only Sinners own Folly and Madneſs that brought them to this woful and miſerable Condition? How will they be ready even to rend and tear themſelves in pieces, their Conſciences curſe their Wills, and their Wills curſe their Affections, and their Affections the Objects that enticed them to the commiſſion of thoſe Sins, the Revenges of which they muſt now eternally ſuffer? And as for the *Bodies* of theſe Damned Souls, they ſhall after the *Reſurrection* and dreadful *Day of Judgment*, become all Fire, like a live Coal, Fire ſhall be imbibed into the very Subſtance of them, and they not have ſo much *as a drop of Water afforded*

Luke 16. *them to cool the tip of their Tongues.* Every Limb ſhall drop whole flakes of *Fire and Brimſtone*, and they ſhall be ſo ſcourged with knotted and twiſted Serpents, as to be made all over one great fiery Wound and Ulcer. And this is a third Conſideration of the dreadfulneſs of everlaſting Vengeance; *It is a falling into God's Hands.*

4. *Fourthly*, Conſider, it is *a falling into the Hands of the Living God himſelf*, and not of any Creature. Indeed we read in 2 *Sam.* 24. 14. that *David* choſe rather *to fall into the Hands of the Lord, than into the Hands of Men.* It is true, when there is true Repentance, and hopes of obtaining Mercy, this is far more eligible: for the Chaſtiſements of the Lord are full of Mercy; but the tender Mercies of the wicked are cruel.

2 Sam. 24. 14.

cruel. But where all hopes and expectations of Mercy are excluded, as they are in Hell, certainly there it is infinitely more dreadful to fall into the Hands of a Sin-revenging-God, than into the Hands of all the Creatures in Heaven, or Earth, yea or Hell it ſelf. One would have thought it had been terrible enough, if the Apoſtle had ſaid, It is a fearful thing to fall into the Hands of *Devils*, and ſo indeed it were, if we conſider either their Power, or their Malice: Certainly they can eaſily find out ſuch tormenting Ingredients, and apply them alſo to ſuch tender Parts, that it would tranſcend the Patience of any Man on Earth quietly to bear but what one *Devil* can inflict. Do we not often ſee in the Illuſions of black and ſooty

ſooty *Melancholy*, what ſtrange Fears and Terrors they can imprint upon the Fancy, what Horrour and Deſpair they can work in the Conſcience, ſo as to make Men weary of their Lives, and many times perſwade them to deſtroy themſelves, only to know the worſt of what they muſt ſuffer? And all this he can do out of his own Kingdom; what then can he do when he hath got Sinners into his own Territories, and under his own Dominions? What exact Tortures can he inflict upon them there? ſuch indeed as we cannot tell what they are, and may it pleaſe God we never may.

And yet the *Devil* is but a fellow-Creature; but wicked Men are to fall into the Hands, not of a Creature, but of the great Crea-

Creatour, into the Hands of God himſelf, whoſe Power is infinitely beyond the Devils, ſo that he is the Tormentor even of them.

Think then with thy ſelf *O Sinner*, that if God binds and ſcourges, and torments the very Devils, who yet do ſo inſufferably torment the Damned, how infinitely intollerable then is that Wrath which God himſelf ſhall inflict upon them? Conſider with thy ſelf, if thou canſt not bear thoſe Pains and Torments which the *Devils* inflict, and if the *Devils* cannot bear thoſe Pains and Torments which God inflicts upon them; how wilt thou then, O Sinner, be able to bear the immediate Wrath, Fury, and Vengeance of the great God himſelf?

Nay

Nay let me go yet a great deal lower; and ſuppoſe that God ſhould make uſe of common and ordinary Creatures for the puniſhment of wicked Men, who is there that could bear even this? If God ſhould only keep a Man living for ever in the midſt of a Furnace of groſs and earthly Fire, how dreadful would this be! If but a Spark of Fire fall upon any part of the Body, conſider what an acute Pain it will cauſe, much more if thy whole Man ſhould be all over on a light Flame, and thou for ever kept alive to feel the piercing Torment of it. And yet what is our dull unactive Fire in compariſon of that pure intelligent Fire, which ſhall melt down the Damned like Wax, and lick up the very Spirits of their Souls? Or ſuppoſe God who

who knows the ſeveral Stings that are in all his Creatures, ſhould take out of them the moſt ſharp Ingredients, and from them all make up a moſt tormenting Compoſition; if he ſhould take Poiſon and Venome out of one, and Fire and Scorching out of another, and Smart and Stinging out of a third, and the Quinteſſence of Bitterneſs out of a fourth; and by his infinite Skill, heighten all theſe to a preternatural Acrimony; if now God ſhould apply this Compoſition thus fatally mixed and blended together, unto any of us, what an intollerable Anguiſh would it cauſe in us? And if Creatures can cauſe ſuch Tortures, what a dreadful thing then is it to fall into the Hands of God himſelf? For when God conveys his Wrath to us by Crea-

Creatures, it muſt needs loſe infinitely in the very Conveyance. When God takes up one Creature to ſtrike another, it is but as if a *Gyant* ſhould take up a *Straw* or *Feather* to ſtrike with; for though he be never ſo ſtrong, yet the Blow can be but weak becauſe of the weakneſs of the Inſtrument; and yet alas how terrible are even ſuch weak Blows to us? What will it then be when God ſhall immediately cruſh us by the unrebated ſtrokes of his own Almighty Arm, and ſhall expreſs the Power of his Wrath, and the Glory of his Juſtice and Severity in our eternal Deſtruction? And this is the *fourth Demonſtration* of the dreadfulneſs of Divine Vengeance.

5. *Fifthly*, Conſider that the Apoſtle calls this Wrath, which the living

ving God will inflict upon Sinners by the Name of *Vengeance*. *Vengeance is mine, I will recompence it.* Now *Vengeance* when it is whet and ſharpned by Wrath, will enter deep, and cut the Soul to the very Quick. God acts a two-fold part in the puniſhment of Sinners.

Firſt, of a *Judge*. In relation to which their Eternal Torments are ſometimes called Condemnation; ſo 1 *Tim.* 3. 6. we have mention made of *the Condemnation of the Devil*; That is, that ſtate of Woe and Wrath to which the *Devil* is for ever ſentenced. And Damnation, *Mat.* 23. 33. *How can you eſcape the Damnation of Hell?* And ſometimes it is termed Judgment, *Heb.* 10. 27. *A certain fearful looking for of Judgment and Fiery Indignation.* And in *Jude* 15. 1. 1 Tim. 3. 6. Heb. 10. 27. Jude 15.

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to execute Judgment upon all the Ungodly. Which denotes that their Puniſhment ſhall be inflicted upon them from God, as he is a Juſt and Righteous Judg.

2. And *Secondly*, God is an *Avenger* as well as a *Judge*. He is a Party concerned, as having been wronged, affronted, and injured by their Sins. And in relation to this, the Puniſhments that God will inflict upon them, are called Wrath and Fury, ſmoaking Anger and Jealouſy: *Deut.* 29. 20. *The Anger of the Lord and his Jealouſy ſhall ſmoak againſt that Man.* Alſo, Fiery Indignation, *Heb.* 10. 27. All which we find amaſs'd and heaped together, *Zeph.* 3. 8. *My Determination* (ſaith God) *is to gather the Nations, to pour upon them mine Indignation, even all my fierce Anger; for all the Earth ſhall be devoured with the*

Deut. 29. 20.

Heb. 10. 27.

Zeph. 3. 8.

the Fire of my Jealouſy. Now, all theſe Expreſſions ſignify to us the terribleneſs of that *Vengeance* which God will take. For when the Wrath of Man only ſtirs him up to revenge an Injury, he will be ſure to do it to the very utmoſt extremity of all his Power. And if the *Revenge* of a poor weak Man be ſo dreadful a thing; how inſupportable will be the *Vengeance* of the great God, who aſſumes it to himſelf as part of his Royalty? *Vengeance is mine.* See that terrible place, *Nahum* 1. 2. *God is jealous, and the Lord revengeth: the Lord revengeth, and is furious, the Lord will take Vengeance on his Adverſaries, and he reſerveth Wrath for his Enemies.* God reſerveth Wrath for Sinners, and keeps it up in ſtore, even that Wrath which they themſelves have treaſured up againſt the Day of Wrath. Nah. 1. 2.

Now this *Revenging-Wrath* of God hath theſe two things in it that juſtly make it dreadful.

1. *Firſt*, In that, *Revenge* always aims at Satisfaction, and ſeeks to repair Injuries received, by inflicting Puniſhment on the Offender. This gives eaſe to the Party grieved; and if this *Revenge* be commenſurate to the greatneſs of the Offence, he reſts ſatisfied in it. And therefore, God ſpeaking of himſelf according to the Paſſions and Affections of Men, ſolaces himſelf in the thoughts of that *Vengeance* he would take upon Sinners, Iſa. 1. 24. *Iſa.* 1. 24. *Ah, I will eaſe me of mine Adverſaries, I will avenge me of mine Enemies.* And, O think how dreadful that *Revenge* muſt needs be, that ſhall eaſe the Heart of God, and give him ſatisfaction, for all the heinous Pro-

Provocations that Sinners have committed againſt him. For conſider,

Firſt, How great and manifold our Sins and Offences have been, and every act of Sin, yea the leaſt that ever we committed, is an infinite Debt, and carries in it an infinite Guilt, becauſe committed againſt an infinite Majeſty. For all Offences take their Meaſures, not only from the Matter of the Act, but from the Perſon againſt whom they are committed: As a reviling injurious Word againſt our *Equals*, will but bear an Action at Law, but againſt the *Prince*, it is High-Treaſon, and puniſhable with Death. So here, the leaſt Offence againſt the infinite Majeſty of the great God, becomes it ſelf infinite: The Guilt of it is far beyond whatſoever we can poſſibly 1.

conceive: and yet what infinite Numbers of theſe infinite Sins have we committed? The *Pſalmiſt* tells us, *They are more than the Hairs of our Head*, *Pſalm* 40. 12. Yea, we may well take in all the Sands of the Sea-ſhore to caſt them up by. Our Thoughts are inceſſantly in Motion; they keep pace with the Moments, and are continually twinkling, and yet, *Every Imagination of the Thoughts of our Hearts is evil.* What Multitudes of them have been groſly wicked and impious; Atheiſtical, Blaſphemous, Unclean, Worldly, and Malicious! and the beſt of them have been very defective, and far ſhort of that Spirituality and Heavenlineſs that ought to give a Tincture unto them. And beſides the Sins of our Thoughts, how deep have our *Tongues* ſet

Pſal. 40. 12.

us on the ſcore? We have talkt our ſelves in debt to the Juſtice of God, and with our own Breath have been blowing up our everlaſting and unquenchable Fire. And add to theſe the numberleſs crowd and ſum of our ſinful Actions, wherein we have buſily imployed our ſelves to provoke the Holy and Jealous God to Wrath, and we ſhall find our Sins to be doubly infinite in their own particular Guilt and Demerit. And now, *O Sinner*, when an angry and furious God ſhall come to exact from thee a full ſatisfaction for all theſe Injuries, a Satisfaction in which he may eternally reſt and acquieſce, ſuch as may repair and recompence his wronged Honour, think ſadly with thy ſelf, how infinitely dreadful this muſt needs be. Aſſure thy ſelf God

will not loſe by thee, but will fetch his Glory out of thee, and take ſuch a *Revenge* upon thee as ſhall as much pleaſe and content him, as his infinite Mercy doth in thoſe whom he ſaves and glorifies. And how great then muſt this *Vengeance* be?

2. *Secondly*, Conſider how dreadful a Revenge God took on his own dear Son, our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, when he came to ſatisfy his Juſtice upon him for our Sins. His Wrath fell infinitely heavy upon him, and the preſſure of it was ſo intollerable, that it ſqueezed out drops of clotted Blood from him in the *Garden*, and that ſad Cry on the Croſs, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* And yet,

1. *Firſt*, Our Lord Chriſt was ſupported under all his Sufferings by the ineffable Union of the

thé *Deity.* He had infinite Power for him, as well as againſt him; infinite Power to bear him up, as well as to cruſh him. In Chriſt's Sufferings, the Power of God ſeem'd as it were to encounter with it ſelf, and to run contrary to it ſelf in the ſame Channel. And as he had the ſupport of infinite Power in his Sufferings, ſo likewiſe had he in the greateſt of his Angonies the Miniſtry of *Angels* to comfort him, and to refreſh the Droopings and Faintings of his Humane Nature. And,

Secondly, The infinite Digni- 2.
ty of Chriſt's Perſon, being God as well as Man, might well compound for the Rigour of his Puniſhments, and ſtamp ſuch a Value upon his Humiliation, that leſs degrees of Suffering from him, might be fully ſatis-

factory. For indeed it cannot be but an infinite Puniſhment, for an infinite Perſon to be puniſhed. But thou that art but a vile contemptible Creature, made up of Mudd and Slime, haſt nothing in thy Nature wherewith to ſatisfy the dread Juſtice of God, but only the eternal Deſtruction and Perdition of it. Thou haſt no Worth nor Dignity, the conſideration whereof might perſwade the Almighty to mitigate the leaſt of his Wrath and Fury upon thee: And when it falls in all its weight and force upon thee, thou haſt nothing to uphold or ſupport thee. It is true, the Almighty Power of God ſhall continue thee in thy Being, but thou wilt for ever curſe and blaſpeme that Support, that ſhall be given thee only to perpetuate thy

thy Torments, and ten thouſand times wiſh that God would deſtroy thee once for all, and that thou mighteſt for ever ſhrink away into nothing: but that, alas, poor miſerable Wretch will not be granted thee; no, thou ſhalt not have ſo much as the relief and comfort of dying, nor eſcape the Vengeance of God by Annihilation: but his Power will for ever ſo ſupport thee, as for ever to torment thee, which is only ſuch a Support as a Man is ſupported on the *Rack* or on the *Wheel*, ſupported ſo as they cannot come off, the very Engine of their Torture upholds them. And as for any help or relief the Miniſtry of Angels will afford thee, think what ſolace it will bring thee, when God ſhall ſet on whole Legions of *infernal Ghoſts*, black and

and hideous Spirits, as the Executioners of his Wrath, who ſhall for ever triumph in thy Woes and add to them, hurl Fire-brands at thee, heap fewel about thee, and fully ſatiate their Malice upon thee, as God ſatisfies his Juſtice. And this is one *Conſideration* of the dreadfulneſs of this Vengeance, in that it aims at and exacts ſatisfaction for Sin, which will be infinitely intolerable, becauſe our Sins are infinite both in Number and Heinouſneſs. And becauſe Jeſus Chriſt, who was to ſatisfy not for his own, but for the Sins of others, though he were upheld by the *Divine Nature*, and poſſibly underwent not ſuch Acrimony of Wrath as the Damned do, yet his Sufferings were unſpeakable and unknown Sorrows: And how much

much ſorer then ſhall wicked Men bear for their own Sins, when Juſtice ſhall come to reckon with them, and to exact from them to the very utmoſt Farthing of all that they owe?

2. *Secondly*, Conſider that *Revenging Wrath* ſtirs up all that is in God againſt a Sinner. *Wrath* when it is whet and ſet on by *Revenge*, redoubles a Man's Force, and makes him perform Things that he could not do in his cold Blood, it fires all a Man's Spirits, and calls them forth to expreſs their utmoſt Efforts. So this *Revenging Wrath* of God draws forth all the Force and Activity of his Attributes, and ſets them againſt a Sinner, and how dreadful then muſt that Execution needs be? We ſee what great Works God can perform when he is not ſtirred

red up thereunto by his Wrath and Indignation. He ſpeaks a whole World into Being, and ſpeaks it with a cold and calm Breath. Certainly it was no ſmall peice of work, to ſpread out the Heavens, and lay the Foundations of the Earth, and to work all thoſe Wonders of *Creation* and *Providence* which we daily behold; but yet all theſe Things God did, (if I may ſo ſpeak) without any Emotion. But when he comes to take *Vengeance* upon Sinners, he is then inflamed, all that is in God, is as it were on fire. *Jealouſy*, ſays *Solomon*, *is the Rage of a Man*,
Prov. 6. 34. *Proverbs* 6. 34. Now when God's Jealouſy ſhall be ſtirred in him, think how impetuouſly it will break forth in the fear-
Iſa. 42. 13. ful effects of it. Iſa. 42. 13. *The Lord ſhall ſtir up Jealouſy*

like

like a Man of War; he ſhall cry, yea, roar, he ſhall prevail againſt his Enemies. If the calm and ſedate Works of God are ſo great and wonderful, how great then will his *Vengeance* be, when Anger, Fury, and Indignation ſhall excite and whet his Power to ſhew the very utmoſt of what it can do? And therefore we find that though God had inflicted dreadful Plagues upon the *Iſraelites* in the Wilderneſs, and had ſhewn mighty effects of his Power and Vengeance, yet we find the *Church* bleſſeth him, *That he turned away his Anger, and did not ſtir up all his Wrath.* But in *Hell* God ſtirs up all his Wrath, every thing is ſet and bent againſt the Damned: And as to the *Saints* in Heaven, every Attribute of God concurs to make him merciful and gracious to them.

Pſal. 78. 38.

them. So to the Wicked in *Hell*, all the Perfections of God conſpire either to ſtir up and kindle his Wrath, or elſe to aſſiſt him in the execution of it upon them. The infinite *Wiſdom* of God contrives their Puniſhments, and which way to lay them on, ſo that they ſhall be moſt ſharp and poinant. The *Power* of God that rouſes it ſelf againſt them, and proffers all its Succours and Aſſiſtance unto *Vengeance*. The *Eternity* and *Unchangeableneſs* of God come in as a dreadful Addition, and makes that Wrath which of it ſelf is inſupportable, to be alſo everlaſting? Yea that ſweet and mild Attribute of God, his *Mercy*, the only Refuge and the only comfort of miſerable Mankind, yet even this turns againſt them too, and be-

becauſe they deſpiſed it when it ſhone forth in Patience and Forbearance, will not now regard them when they ſtand in need of its Reſcue and Deliverance: So that all that is in God, arms it ſelf to take *Vengeance* on Sinners: And O think how ſore and fearful that Vengeance will be, when God ſhall put forth all that is in himſelf for the executing of his Wrath upon impenitent Sinners! And thus I have done with the *Demonſtrations* of the Dreadfulneſs of God's Wrath taken from the Words in the Text, *Vengeance is mine, I will recompence it. 'Tis a fearful thing to fall into the Hands of the living God.*

Let us now conſider ſome other *Demonſtrations* of the Greatneſs of this Wrath. And, 1.

Firſt, It appears to be exceeding

ceeding dreadful in that it is ſet forth to us in *Scripture* by all thoſe things which are moſt terrible to Humane Nature. God maketh uſe of many *Metaphorical* Expreſſions of things moſt grievous to our Senſes, that from them we may take an hint to conceive how intolerable his Wrath is in it ſelf. It is called
1 Pet. 3. 19. a Priſon, 1 *Peter* 3. 19. where mention is made of the *Spirits in Priſon*; that is, the Souls of thoſe Men to whom the Spirit of Chriſt in *Noah* went, and preached in the Days of their Mortal Life, but for their Diſobedience are ſhut up under the Wrath of God in Hell. And certainly *Hell* is a Priſon large enough to hold all the World.
Pſal. 9. 17. *Pſalm* 9. 17. *The Wicked ſhall be turned into Hell, and all the Nations that forget God.* A Priſon it

is

is where the *Devil* and wicked Spirits are ſhackled with Chains of maſſy and ſubſtantial Darkneſs. 2 *Peter* 2. 4. *They are,* ſays the Apoſtle, *reſerved in Chains of Darkneſs unto the Judgment of the great Day.* And they are there kept in everlaſting Chains under Darkneſs, not one Cranny in this great Priſon to let in the leaſt ray or glimpſe of Light. It is called a *Place of Torment*, *Luke* 16. 28. It is a Region of Woe and Miſery, wherein Horrour, Deſpair, and Torture for ever dwell, and are in their moſt proper Seat and Habitation. It is called, *a drowning of Men in Deſtruction and Perdition*, 1 *Timothy* 6. 9. One would think that to be drowned, might ſignify Death enough of it ſelf; but to be drowned in Perdition and

2 Pet. 2. 4.

Luke 16.28.

Deſtruction, ſignifies moreover the fatalneſs and the depth of that Death into which they are plunged. It is called, *a being caſt bound Hand and Foot into ut-*
Mat. 22. 13. *ter Darkneſs*, Matth. 22. 13. *A being thrown into a Furnace of Fire*, to be burnt alive, *Matth.* 13. 42, 50. It is called, *a Lake*
Rev. 20. 15. *of Fire*, Rev. 20. 15. into which wicked Men ſhall be plunged all over, where they ſhall lye wallowing and rowling among Millions of damned Spirits, in thoſe infernal Flames. And this Lake is continually fed with a ſulphurous ſtream of *Brimſtone*, *Rev.* 19. 20. And this Fire and Brimſtone is that which never ſhall
Mat. 3. 12. be quenched. *Matth.* 3. 12. *He will burn up the Chaff with unquenchable Fire.* And *laſtly*, to name no more, it is called everlaſting *Fire*

Fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels, Matth. 25. 41. And now we are arrived at the higheſt pitch of what Sence can feel, or Imagination conceive. Or if it be poſſible that in your deepeſt Thoughts you can conceive any thing more dreadful than this, you may call it a *Sea of molten Brimſtone*, ſet all on fire, and continually ſpewing out ſooty dark Flames, wherein endleſs Multitudes of ſinful Wretches muſt lye tumbling to all Eternity, burnt up with the fierceneſs of a tormenting and devouring Fire, ſcourged with Scorpions, ſtung with fiery Serpents, howling and roaring inceſſantly, and none to pity, much leſs to relieve and help them, grinding and gnaſhing their Teeth through the extremity of their Anguiſh and Tor- Mat. 25.41.

ture. If now you can fancy any thing more terrible and dreadful than this, *Hell* is that, yea and much more: For theſe things are *Metaphorical*; and though I cannot deny but ſome of theſe may be properly and litterally true, yet the litteral ſenſe of theſe *Metaphors* do but faintly and weakly ſhew us what the leaſt part of thoſe everlaſting Torments are.

2. *Secondly*, Another *Demonſtration* of the dreadfulneſs of this Vengeance is this, That it is a Wrath that ſhall come up unto, and equal all our Fears. You know what an inventive and ingenious thing Fear is, what horrid Shapes it can fancy to it ſelf out of every thing: Put but an active Fancy into an Affright, and preſently the whole World will be filled with

with ſtrange Monſters and hideous Apparitions. The very ſhaking of a leaf will ſometimes rout all the Forces and Reſolutions of Men: And uſually it is this wild Paſſion that doth inhance all other Dangers, and make them ſeem greater and more dreadful than indeed they are. But now here it is impoſſible for a wicked Man to fear more than he ſhall certainly ſuffer. Let his Imaginations be hung round with all the diſmal Shapes that ever frighted Men out of their Wits; let his Fancy dip its Pencil in the deepeſt Melancholy that ever any Soul was beſmeered with, and then ſtrive to pourtray and expreſs the moſt terrible things that it can judge to be the *Objects* of Fear, or the Inſtruments of *Torment*, yet the

Wrath of the great God vaſtly exceeds all that Fear it ſelf can poſſibly repreſent. See that ſtrange Expreſſion, *Pſalm* 90. 11. *Who knows the Power of thine Anger? according to thy Fear, ſo is thy Wrath.* That is, according to the fear Men have of thee, as dreadful and as terrible as they can poſſibly apprehend thy *Wrath* to be, ſo it is, and much more. Let the Heart of Man ſtretch it ſelf to the utmoſt bounds of Imagination, and call into its Aid all the things that ever it hath heard or ſeen to be dreadful; let it (as that Painter, who to make a beautiful Piece, borrowed ſeveral of the beſt Features from ſeveral beautiful Perſons) borrow all the dreadful, all the direful Repreſentations that ever it met with, to make up one moſt terrible

rible *Idea*; yet the Wrath of God ſhall ſtill exceed it: He can execute more Wrath upon us than we can fear. Some wicked Men in this Life have had a Spark of this Wrath of God fall upon their Conſciences, when they lye roaring out under Deſpair and fearful Expectations of the fiery Indignation of God to conſume and devour them. But alas this is nothing to what they ſhall hereafter feel. God now doth but open to them a ſmall chink and crevice into *Hell*, he now doth but ſuffer a few ſmall drops of his Wrath to fall upon them. And if this be ſo ſore and ſmart that their Fears could never think of any thing more dreadful than what they now ſuffer: O what will it be then when he ſhall overwhelm them with

a whole deluge of his Wrath, and cauſe all his Waves to go over them? *Fear him*, ſays our Saviour, *who is able to deſtroy both Soul and Body in Hell; yea, I* Mat. 10. 28. *ſay unto you, fear him.* And yet when we have feared according to the utmoſt extent of our narrow Hearts, yet ſtill his infinite Power and Wrath is infinitely more fearful than we can fear it.

3. *Thirdly*, Conſider the principal and immediate Subject of this Wrath of God, and that is the *Soul*, and this adds much to the dreadfulneſs of it. The acuteſt Torments that the *Body* is capable of, are but dull and flat things in compariſon of what the *Soul* can feel. Now when God ſhall immediately with his own Hand laſh the Soul, that refined and ſpiritual

Part

Part of Man, the principle of all Life and Senſation, and ſhall draw Blood from it every Stripe, how intolerable may we conceive thoſe Pains and Tortures to be? To ſhoot poiſon'd Darts into a Man's Marrow, to rip up his Bowels with a Sword red hot; all this is as nothing to it. Think what it is to have a drop of ſcalding Oyl, or melted Lead, fall upon the Apple of your Eyes, that ſhould make them boyl and burn till they fall out of your Heads; ſuch Torment, nay infinitely more than ſuch, is it to have the burning Wrath of God to fall upon the Soul. We find that Spirits which are infinitely inferiour unto God, can make ſtrange Impreſſions upon the Souls of Men: and ſhall not the great God much more, who is the Father

ther of Spirits? Yes, he can torture them by his eſſential Wrath. And that God, who, as the Pro-
Nahum 1.6. phet *Nahum* ſpeaks, *can melt Mountains, and make Hills and Rocks flow down at his Preſence*, can melt the Souls of the Damned, like lumps of Wax; for in his Diſpleaſure he doth ſometimes do it to the beſt of Men
Pſal. 22. 14. even in this Life, *Pſalm* 22. 14. *My Heart is melted like Wax in the midſt of my Bowels.*

4. *Fourthly*, The Dreadfulneſs of this Wrath of God may be demonſtrated by this, That the Puniſhment of the Damned is reſerved by God as his laſt Work. It is a Work which he will ſet himſelf about when all the reſt of his Works are done, when he hath folded up the World, and laid it aſide as a Thing of no further uſe, then will

will God ſet himſelf to this great Work, and pour out all the Treaſures of his Wrath upon damned Wretches, as if God would ſo wholly mind this Buſineſs that he would lay all other Affairs aſide, that he might be intent only upon this, having no other thing to interrupt him. Think then how full of Dread and Terror this muſt needs be, when God will as it were employ all his *Eternity* about this, and have no other thing to take him off from doing it with all his Might. God hath reſerved two Works, and but two for the other World; One is the *Salvation of the Elect*, and the other is the *Damnation of Reprobates.*

Now it is remarkable that God's laſt Works do always exceed his former: And therefore we

we find in the *Creation* of the World, God ſtill proceeded on from more imperfect kind of Creatures to thoſe that were more perfect, until he had fully built and finiſhed, yea carved and as it were painted this great Houſe of the Univerſe; and then he brings Man into it as his laſt Work, as the Crown and Perfection of the reſt: So God likewiſe acted in the manner of *revealing his Will* unto Mankind, firſt he ſpake to them by *Dreams* and *Viſions*, but in the laſt Days (as the *Apoſtle* expreſſeth it) *he hath ſpoken unto us by his Son.* So alſo in the Diſpenſation of the Covenant of Grace, and Exhibition of the *Meſſiah*, firſt he was made known only by *Promiſe* to the Fathers, then in *Types* and obſcure Reſemblances to the *Jews*, but in the

the latter Days, himſelf came and took upon him the form of a Servant, and wrought out a compleat *Redemption* for us. So uſually the laſt Works of God are more compleat, perfect and excellent than the former. Now God's puniſhing-Work is his laſt Work, and therefore it ſhall exceed in Greatneſs all that ever went before it. In his firſt Work, the Creation of the World, he demonſtrated his infinite Power, Wiſdom, and Godhead; but in the Deſtruction of Sinners, which is his laſt Work, he will manifeſt more of Power and Wiſdom, than he did in his creating them; and how fearful a Deſtruction then muſt this needs be? God hath variety of Works that he is carrying on in this World, and if his Glory doth not perfectly appear

appear in one, he may manifeſt it in another. But when he ſhall confine himſelf only to two, as he will in the World to come, the ſaving of the Godly, and the damning of the Wicked, and this without any variety or change, certainly then theſe ſhall be performed to the very utmoſt of what God can do: for as he will ſave the Saints to the very utmoſt; ſo likewiſe will he damn and deſtroy Sinners to the very utmoſt.

5. *Fifthly*, Another Demonſtration of the dreadfulneſs of this Wrath ſhall be drawn from this Conſideration, That God will for ever inflict it for the glorifying of his Power on the Damned. *Rom.* 9. 22. *What if God willing to ſhew his Wrath, and make his Power known*: And 2 Theſſ. 1. 9. *They ſhall be puniſh'd with everlaſting*

laſting Deſtruction from the Preſence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power. Now certainly, if God will inflict eternal Puniſhments upon them to ſhew forth his Power, their Puniſhments muſt needs be infinitely great. For,

Firſt, All thoſe Works where- 1.
in God ſhews forth his Power, are great and ſtupendous. Conſider what Power it was for God to lay the Beams of the World, and to erect ſo ſtately a Fabrick as Heaven and Earth. The Apoſtle therefore tells us, That *by the Creation of the World, is underſtood the eternal Power of God*, Rom. 1. 20. When God ſhewed his Power in creating, O what a great and ſtupendous Work did he produce! And therefore certainly when God ſhall likewiſe ſhew his Power

in

in deſtroying, the Puniſhments he will inflict will be wonderful and ſtupendous.

2. *Secondly*, Conſider God can eaſily deſtroy a Creature without ſhewing any great Power, or putting forth his Almighty Arm and Strength to do it. If he only withdraw his Power by which he upholds all things in their Beings, we ſhould quickly fall all abroad into nothing: So eaſy is it for God to deſtroy the well-being of all his Creatures. But now if God will expreſs the greatneſs and infiniteneſs of his Power in deſtroying Sinners, whom yet he can deſtroy without putting forth his Power, yea only by withdrawing and withholding it; O how fearful muſt this Deſtruction needs be! Alas we are cruſht before the Moth, and muſt needs periſh

periſh, if God doth but ſuſpend the influence of his Power from us. How dreadfully then will he deſtroy when he ſhall lay forth his infinite Power to do it, who can eaſily do it without Power?

And thus I have laid down ſome *Demonſtrations* of the dreadfulneſs of the Wrath and Vengeance of God, five of them drawn from the Words of the *Text*, and five drawn from other Conſiderations. I ſhall now ſhut up with two or three Words of Application.

Firſt, Then be perſwaded to believe that there is ſuch a dreadful Wrath to come. I know well, you all profeſs that you do believe, that as there are unconceivable Rewards of Glory reſerved in *Heaven* for the Saints, ſo that there are inexhauſtible Treaſures of Wrath reſerved and *1. Uſe.*

laid up in *Hell* for all ungodly and impenitent Sinners. But O how few are there that do really and cordially believe theſe things: Mens own Lives may be evident Convictions to themſelves of their Atheiſm and Infidelity: For the true reaſon of all that diſſoluteneſs which we ſee abroad in the World proceeds much from hence, becauſe Men are not perſwaded that theſe dreadful Terrors of the Lord which have now been ſet before us, are any thing but an honeſt Artifice. They look upon them as things only invented to ſcare the World into good order, and to awe Men into ſome compaſs of Civility and Honeſty: They think all thoſe tremendous Threatnings that God hath denounced in his Law to be things intended rather to fright Men than

than to do execution upon them. And whereas one of the moſt effectual Motives to Piety and an holy Life, is to be perſwaded of the Terrors of the Lord, theſe are not yet perſwaded that there are any ſuch Terrors: But aſſure your ſelves theſe are not the extravagant Dreams of *Melancholy Fancies*, nor the Politick Impoſtures of Men that deſign to amuſe the World with frightful Stories; but they are ſad and ſerious Truths, ſuch as however you may now ſlight & contemn, yet ſhall you be wofully convinced of by your own experience, when after a few years, or poſſibly a few days, you ſhall be ſunk down into that Place of Torment, that Gulph and Abyſs of Miſery, where the great God ſhall for ever expreſs the Art, and the Power of his Venge-

ance in your everlaſting Deſtruction.

2. *Uſe.* *Secondly*, This ſpeaks abundance of comfort to all thoſe whoſe Sins are pardon'd, and they delivered from the Wrath to come. Look what Spring-tides of Joy would riſe in the Heart of a poor condemned *Malefactor*, who every moment expects the ſtroke of Juſtice to cut him off, to have a Pardon interpoſe and reſcue him from Death. Such, yea far greater ſhould be thy Joy who art freed meerly by a gracious Pardon, from a Condemnation infinitely greater and worſe than Death it ſelf. When we look into *Hell*, and conſider the Wrath that the Damned there lye under, O to behold them there reſtleſly rolling to and fro in Chains and Flames, to hear them exclaim againſt their own

Folly

Folly and Madneſs, and to curſe Themſelves and their Aſſociates as the cauſes of their heavy and doleful Torments; how ſhould we rejoice that though we have been guilty of many great and heinous Sins, and have ten thouſand times deſerved *Hell* and everlaſting Burnings, yet our good and gracious God hath freely pardon'd us our Debts, and freed us from the ſame merited Puniſhments.

Thirdly, This alſo ſhould excite us to magnify the Love of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt towards us, who though he knew what the dreadful Wrath of God was, how ſore and heavy it would lye upon his Soul, yet ſuch was his infinite Compaſſion towards us, that he willingly ſubmitted himſelf to be in our ſtead, took upon him our Nature, that he might take

3. *Uſe.*

take upon him our Guilt; and firſt made himſelf wretched, that he might be made accurſed. He drank off the whole bitter Cup of his Father's Wrath at one bitter draught, received the whole ſting of Death into his Body at once; falls and dies under the Revenges of Divine Juſtice, only that we might be delivered from the Wrath that we had deſerved, but could not bear. O Chriſtian, let thy Heart be inlarged with great Love and Thankfulneſs to thy bleſſed Redeemer; and as he thought nothing too much to ſuffer for thee, return him this Expreſſion of thy Thankfulneſs to think nothing too much, nor too hard to do or to ſuffer for him.

4. *Uſe.* *Fourthly*, You that go on in Sin, conſider what a God you have to deal withal; You have not to do with Creatures, but with God him-

himſelf. And do you not fear that increated Fire that will wrap you up in Flames of his eſſential Wrath, and burn you for ever? Conſider that dreadful Expoſtulation that God makes, *Ezek.* 22. 14. *Can thy Heart indure, or can thy Hands be ſtrong in the Day that I ſhall deal with thee, ſaith the Lord?* The very weakneſs of God is ſtronger than Man: God can breath, he can look a Man to Death; *Job* 4. 9. *By the Blaſt of God they periſh, and by the Breath of his Noſtrils are they conſumed: They periſh at the Rebuke of thy Countenance, Pſalm* 80. 16. O then tremble to think what a load of Wrath his heavy Hand can lay upon thee, *That Hand which ſpans the Heavens, and in the Hollow of which he holds the Sea.* What Puniſhment will this great Hand of God in which his great Strength lies,

Ezek. 22. 14.

Job 4. 9.

Pſal. 80. 16.

Iſa. 40. 12.

lies, inflict when it ſhall fall upon thee in the full Power of its Might? And tell me now, *O Sinner*, wouldſt thou willingly fall into the Hands of this God, who is thus able to cruſh thee to pieces, yea to nothing? O how ſhall any of us then dare, who are but poor weak Potſherds of the Earth, daſh our ſelves againſt this Rock of Ages? Indeed we can neither reſiſt his Power, nor eſcape his Hand: and therefore ſince we muſt neceſſarily ſooner or later fall into the Hands of God, let us by true Repentance and an humble Acknowledgment of our Sins and Vileneſs, throw our ſelves into his merciful Hands, and then to our unſpeakable Comfort we ſhall find that he will extend his Arm of Mercy to ſupport us, and not his Hand of Juſtice to cruſh and break us. *FINIS.*